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NEW IN CHESS

Magnus Carlsen successfully defends title

Anish Giri annotates
Sochi highlights

Predictably unpredictable
Baadur Jobava

Nigel Short
Our man in the Isle of Man

Alexander Grischuk

Or will he be the next Challenger?

2800+ after Petrosian Memorial

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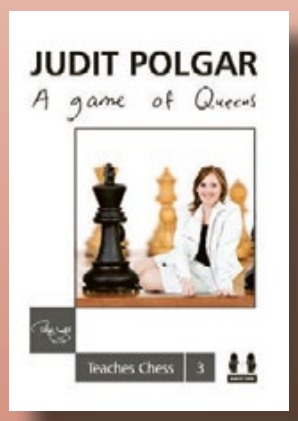
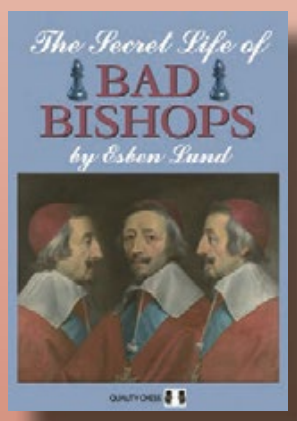
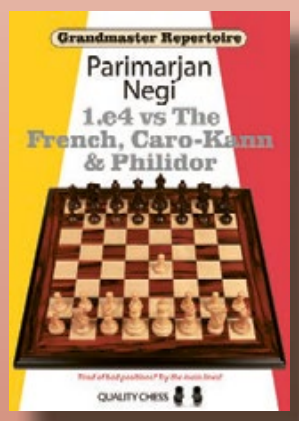
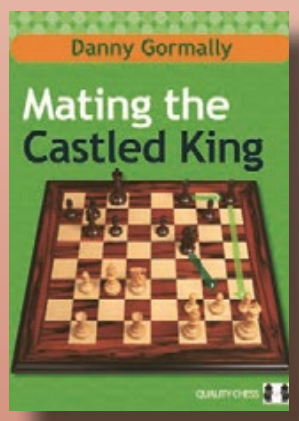
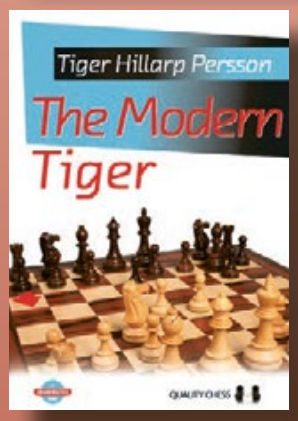
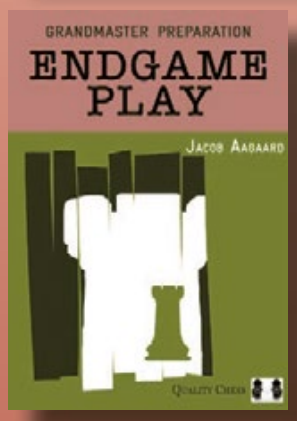


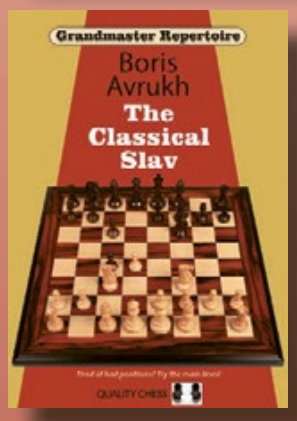


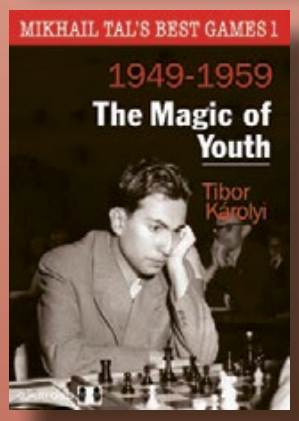


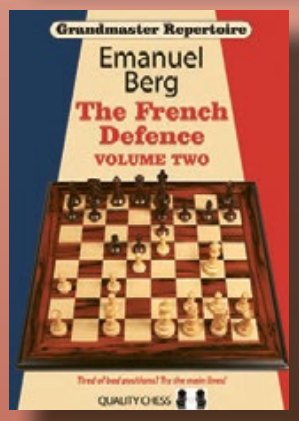




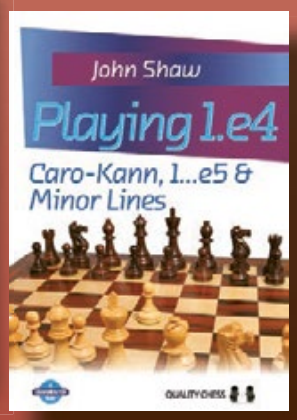


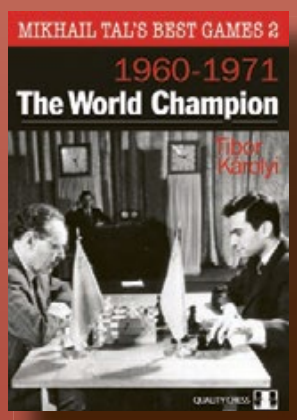


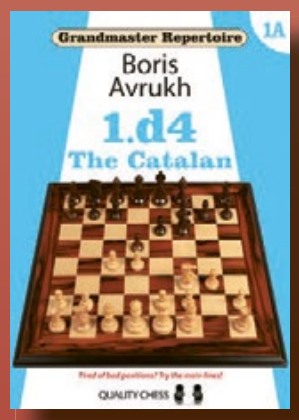


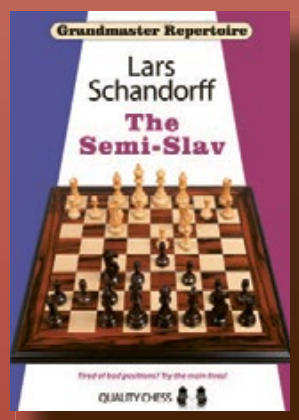


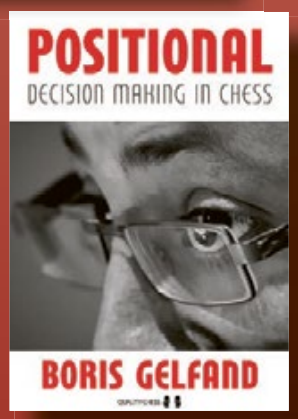
and 2015 looks even better!

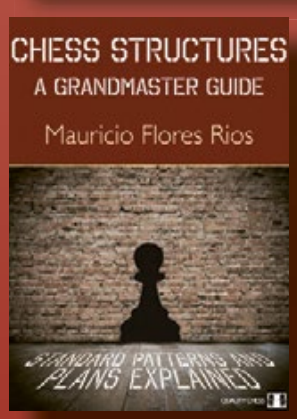


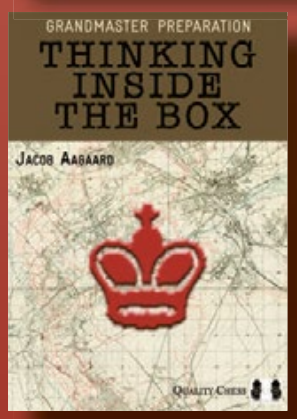


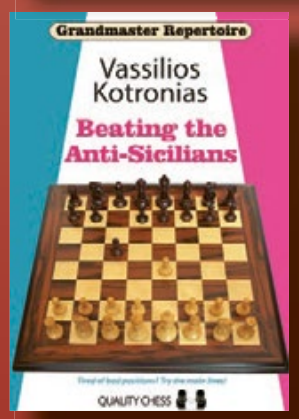












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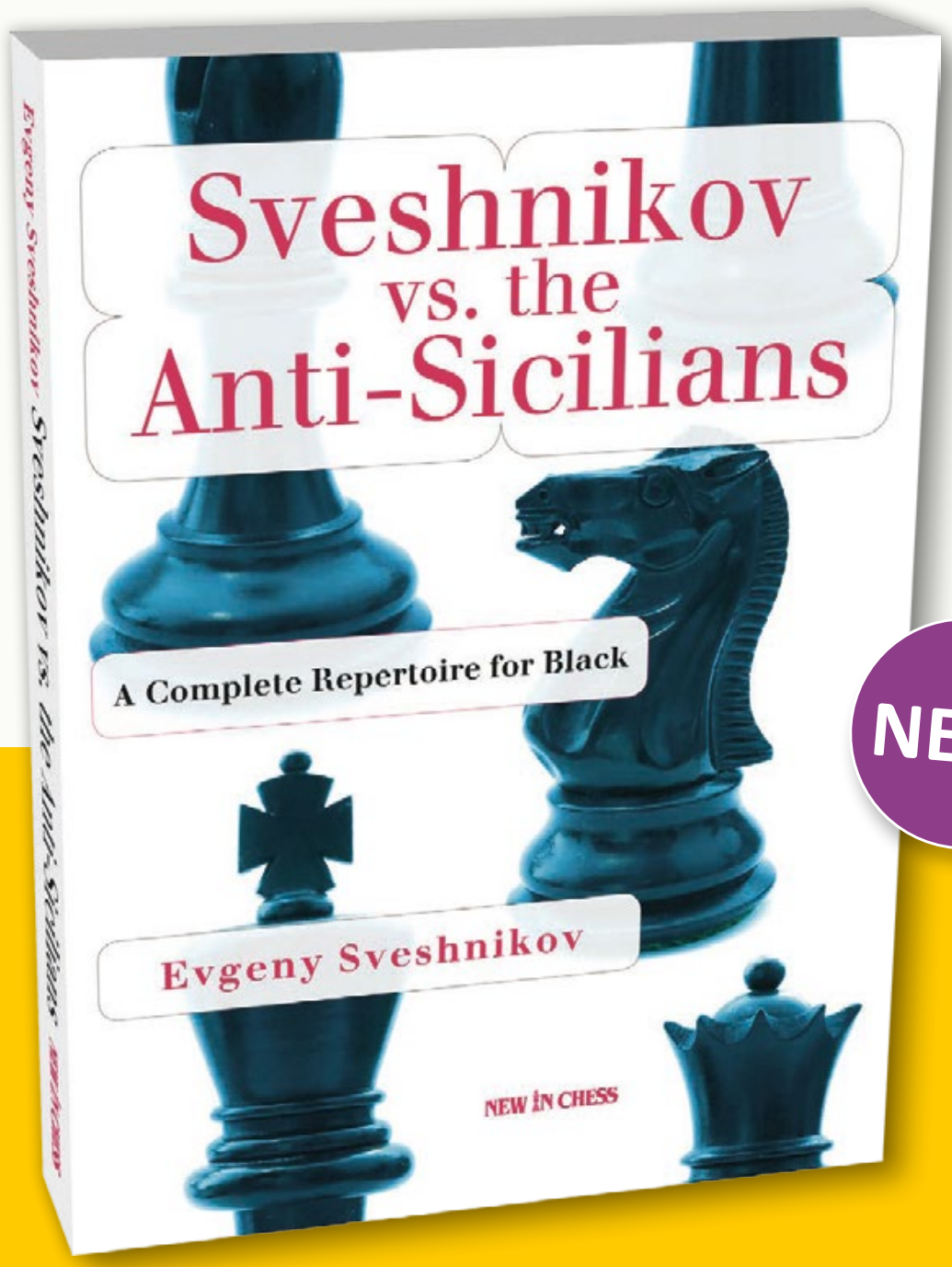
Evgeny Sveshnikov offers help



One by one, Evgeny Sveshnikov tackles annoying Anti-Sicilian lines, ranging from primitive and aggressive to respected but tedious. With great ingenuity he presents a watertight repertoire that consists of fresh, practical and effective opening ideas.

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COVER
Alexander Grischuk: New In Chess; Magnus Carlsen: Maria Emelianova

'For me Magnus is very funny. He is like a gnome, who has grown from the earth. A good ghost from underground. Always mysterious, but always fighting. Magnus was born for chess. He was a gift from Caissa.' – *Boris Spassky*

Metamorphosis

As you can glean from our coverage of the World Championship match in this issue, chess as a matter of national importance is making a compelling comeback in Russia. The royal game is warmly embraced again as an essential part of the Russian heritage, both by political leaders and wealthy sponsors. New prestigious tournaments are being planned, while at the same time the rich history of Russian and Soviet chess is treated with respect and pride. Over the past years, the headquarters of the Russian Chess Federation on Gogolevsky Boulevard have undergone a thorough metamorphosis. The building was beautifully refurbished room by room. What must it feel like, these days, for the participants in the weekly competitions to play underneath the chandeliers of the Chigorin room, with the Father of Russian chess benevolently watching you from a stately portrait?

Yuri Averbakh, who, at 92, still comes to the 'Central Chess Club' once a week to work in the library, saw a long-cherished dream come true when

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The 'Museum' in 2011.

the Museum of Chess was reopened in a renovated wing of the building last September.

On our way to the match in Sochi we had the pleasure and privilege to visit the museum together with Yuri Averbakh and the museum's curator, Tatiana Kolesnikovich. Moving moments, as Averbakh, the oldest grandmaster in the world and himself a precious piece of history, had shown us the old museum three years ago. At that point it had already been closed for three years and it was unclear when it was going to be reopened. There was no electricity in the room and as we entered, dust particles were dancing in the rays of light coming in through the

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Yuri Averbakh and Tatiana Kolesnikovich in the brand-new Museum of Chess in 2014.

windows. At first it felt like a storage room in total disorder, but the more you looked the more treasures you saw, as if you'd entered Tutankhamun's tomb. Sitting on the floor in a corner was a painting of Lenin playing chess. Half buried under stacks of paper was the table on which Kasparov and Karpov had played their 1985 match.

All these artefacts and many more are now splendidly displayed in the new museum. Rare chess sets with remarkable histories, such as a set for the children of Czar Nicholas I with Peter the Great as the king, manuscripts by Chigorin, youth photos of Alekhine, fine copies of rare books and what not.

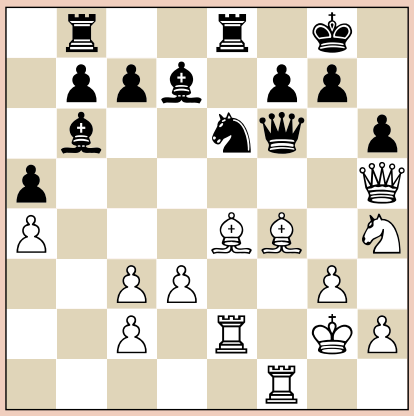
Averbakh's wish now is for the museum to become a state museum, which would ensure steady financial support and longer opening hours. If you plan to visit Moscow, make sure you find out on which days the museum is open. It's definitely worth a visit.

Tal Blitz

As the Russian Chess Federation, no doubt stimulated by the country's leadership, intends to turn Sochi into a chess mecca, it is tempting to speculate about the tournaments they are planning to stage there. One of the events that were named is the Tal Memorial, the most prestigious international tournament to take place in Moscow in the last several years. This year there was no 'classical' Tal Memorial in the capital, but by way of compensation an elite blitz tournament was held in Sochi during the Carlsen-Anand match. At the end of the Petrosian Memorial all the participants minus Aronian (exhibition match against Nakamura in St. Louis) and Ding Liren (visa problems), flew to Sochi together with additional blitz experts like Mamedyarov, Karjakin and Nepomniachtchi. Match commentators Svidler and Kosteniuk also joined the party. And why not? The prize-fund for two days of blitz was $100,000 with $20,000 for the winner.

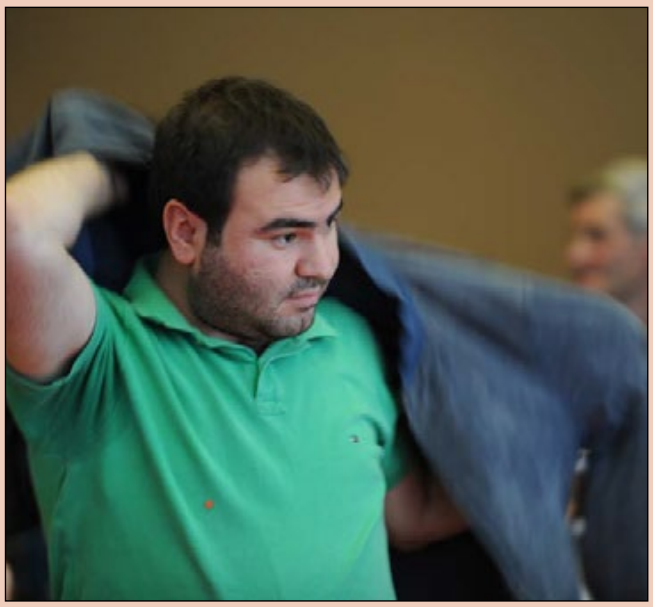
A tight race between super-experts Grischuk and Mamedyarov ended in a victory for the Azeri speed king. On the first day he was on a roll, scoring an unbelievable 10/11, but the second day he struggled and only collected 6 points, which proved enough to stay half a point ahead of the grand total of Grischuk (3rd place was shared by Morozevich, Gelfand and Karjakin, 3½(!) points behind the winner).

Blitz is often a matter of grabbing your chances.



Mamedyarov-Leko
Sochi Tal Memorial Blitz 2014 (12)
position after 25.♗xf4

White is clearly interested in Black's king, but Leko would be perfectly



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Shakhriyar Mamedyarov puts on his jacket after he's scored a baffling 10/11 on the first day of the Tal Memorial blitz.

fine after 25...♘c5, as 26.♗xc7 hits on 26...♗h3+!. Just to be sure Black moves his queen away from the f-file anyway. **25...♕e7?** And gets hit by **26.♗xh6! ♗c6** Obviously, 26...gxh6 27.♘f5 was not really an option. **27.♕g4 ♗xe4+ 28.♖xe4 g6** Asking for devastation. **29.♘xg6 fxg6 30.♕xg6+ ♔h8 31.♖xe6 1-0**

Next Time

One of the future top events that is not supposed to take place in Russia is the 2016 World Championship match. For some reason both FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and the new head of AGON, Ilya Merenzon, proudly announced at the end of the Carlsen-Anand match that the 2016 match will take place in the United States. As no further information whatsoever was provided, it was a bit puzzling why the announcement was made at all.

AGON returned as organizer of the match, in conjunction with the Russian Chess Federation, after the organization had gradually slipped from sight during the first Grand Prix tournaments of the previous cycle. Merenzon, a former minority share-holder, has bought AGON from his friend Andrew Paulson for one British pound. The match in Sochi was well organized, especially taking into account at what short notice everything had to be arranged, but only the future will tell how successful Merenzon will be in realizing his ambitions to find a broad global audience for chess. According to him more than one million people visited the official website every day, with a record 2 million tuning in for the last day. As we have learnt from experience with FIDE events, these figures need to be taken with a grain of salt.

Merenzon says he has a sponsor for the next match. Maybe he has. In any case it was reassuring for 'Kirsan watchers' that Ilyumzhinov didn't declare that the prize-fund of the next match would be 20 million dollars.

Look, it's Sam Sevian!

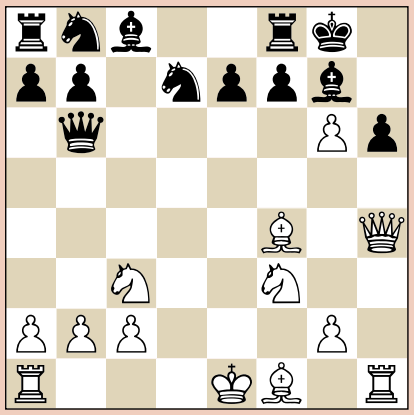
Talking about the United States and records, a remarkable record that may have an impact on the future of American chess was set in St. Louis. In the shadow of an exhibition match between Levon Aronian and Hikaru Nakamura (2-2 in the classical games, the American took the blitz, 9½-6½) the Saint Louis Chess Club organized two 10-player invitational tournaments where IM and GM norms could be made. The GM invitational was a huge success for 13-year-old Sam Sevian (13 years, 10 months and 27 days, to be more precise). The youngster from Boston became the youngest American GM in history, a record previously held by the likes of Fischer, Nakamura and Caruana, and bested the record held by Ray Robson by nearly a full year. Sevian, who had already scored three GM norms before but whose rating was not high enough to claim the GM title, swept the field, 7½/9, and raised his rating above the required 2500 points.

Sam Sevian: in the footsteps of Bobby Fischer.

Sevian's trainer Alexander Chernin was obviously happy with the result, but he expressed some worries about the aggression and risk that his ward displayed. Probably he was the only one with such worries. Look at this and enjoy.

PU 12.9 – B09
Samuel Sevian
Denes Boros
St. Louis 2014 (1)

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.f4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.h4 c5 8.h5 cxd4 9.♕xd4 dxe5 10.♕f2 A move introduced by David Bronstein at the 1958 Olympiad in Munich against Palmiotti (1-0, 29). **10...♕b6** The Italian took on f4, which was also fine. **11.♕h4 exf4 12.hxg6 h6** Safer was 12...♕xg6. Now White probably would be better after 13.gxf7+, but Sevian has different plans. **13.♗xf4**



Wow. This is very sharp. **13...♕xb2 14.♘d5** This was the idea. The white king has a safe hiding place on g3, while his black colleague is in grave danger. **14...♕xa1+ 15.♔f2 ♘c6 16.♗d3 ♕b2** Not ready to give his queen on h1, which was his best chance. **17.♗c1 ♕xa2** Now Black is lost. **18.♗xh6 ♘c5 19.♗xg7 ♘xd3+ 20.♔g3 fxg6 21.♘g5** Black resigned. He will be mated. ■

Trolling and online cheating

I read Dominic Lawson's article on chess trolling (New In Chess 2014/7) with interest. Most of us who follow tournaments online can easily identify such people. Unfortunately, many trollers do not stop there and the problem takes on a more insidious form. Having used Stockfish to ascend to their moral high ground from where they can criticise Alexander Grischuk's latest minor inaccuracy with impunity, a large proportion then log on to a site such as the Internet Chess Club. Failing to disable their engines, they proceed to effortlessly dispose of John Nunn and his ilk in a hail of sacrifices, therefore reinforcing their superiority, at least in some part of their brain.

As someone who has spent the last several months volunteering for the ICC specifically to weed out such cheats, it is lamentable how little is done to prevent their proliferation across all time limits. Indeed I have reported some people over twenty times, together with detailed statistics on their activities, and yet they continue cheating, unmolested by ICC's administrators or hierarchy. In frustration I have stopped helping them. So much for their anti-cheating reputation!

I can only imagine that were these Internet chess sites to adopt a more rigorous and professional stance against cheating (albeit at a cost to their revenue stream), it might help to alter the mindset or even remove some of the large minority whose comments mar the pleasure of following online chess tournaments.

Pete Heaven
Cardiff, Wales

Braveheart (I)

I have known Nigel (Short) for many years and we tend to get along well, but his understanding of British geopolitics (New In Chess 2014/7) appears to be motivated mostly by a simplistic logic that conflates nations with states.

The United Kingdom is a geopolitical anomaly because our constitution is not codified, and 4 separate nations share a state. England has about 87% of the UK population, which means the continued viability of the UK depends upon tempering the domination of England, and preventing the fusion of separate histories, institutions, languages and cultures of the four nations.

Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland do share a lot in common with England, including our sovereign state, but the UK endures because the other 3 nations feel their nationhood is respected, and expressed in the appropriate ways, including sports. Alas chess has minimal political capital, and in that sense Nigel is picking on the weak, but if you tried ending separate representation for football, for instance, it would almost guarantee the end of the UK.

I can see why the UK fielding separate teams looks questionable to the outside world. Catalonia or Quebec, for instance, might feel their claim to nationhood is every bit as relevant. Claims to nationhood will always be contestable, but nations are not nebulous things, and Scotland has nothing to prove in that regard.

Nigel is not alone in his failure to grasp that the Scottish referendum wasn't principally about national identity. It had much more to do with the democratic awakening of a highly engaged electorate who realised that their constitutional settlement prevented them from transforming the political economy.

Polling evidence suggests that one of the main reasons Scotland eventually voted no was not – as Nigel's article implied – that people acquiesced to the notion that Scotland is not a nation. On the contrary, it was because of a desperate last minute 'vow' from UK political leaders, promising Scotland increased devolved power to our existing parliament, recognising our status as a separate nation within the UK.

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I have played chess for Scotland since I was 9 years old, and it was a childhood dream to become strong enough to win the British Championship, which I did three times, and to represent the UK, which I did against China in 2007, on board three behind Nigel, no less.

Culturally, I continue to feel Scottish and British, but I campaigned strongly for a Yes vote for Scottish independence because I feel the UK constitutional settlement is no longer fit for purpose. I felt deeply saddened by the result at the time, but both Scotland and the UK were utterly changed by the referendum, and at the time of writing it seems quite likely to me that Scotland will become politically independent before long.

Jonathan Rowson
Putney, United Kingdom

Braveheart (II)

Lest anyone be persuaded by Nigel Short's rhetoric, in his bravura but historically quite uneven piece, 'Braveheart' (New In Chess 2014/7), let me sound a more properly 'Scottish' and, indeed, mainstream 'British' counter-blast.

Nigel unfortunately starts off shakily. If he really believes that Alex Salmond, former leader of the Scottish National Party, 'may eventually be rewarded with a peerage at Westminster', he frankly hasn't got the slightest grasp of what the recent Referendum on Scottish Independence or nationalist goals were all about. For good or ill, this potentially secessionist step was taken in deadly earnest.

Nigel then seems to argue that Scotland is no 'nation' but a 'region', apparently on the highly shaky grounds that 'there is no such thing as Scottish citizenship'. Ask any modern history or political science university department in the UK about their view on the validity of that particularly restrictive nationalist / citizenship 'equation' and they'd throw up their hands in utter horror.

Don't take my word for it. Just consult, say, two of the greatest (UK) historical blockbusters of the last half century: A.J.P. Taylor's *A History of England 1914-45*, famously stated in its introduction that it more or less excluded 'Scotland', as the author didn't feel particularly competent to include it; Sir Tom Devine's *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, is one of a string of more recent Scottish historical works that have done much to redress that imbalance.

Just about everyone in these curiously mongrel British Isles has long considered themselves proudly to be both 'British' (whatever that is) and either 'Scottish', 'English', 'Welsh' or 'Irish' (whatever these might mean). It is, accordingly, largely due to ancient historical accident that many particular sports, such as football, rugby and chess, developed in the UK on an individual 'home nation', rather than a UK basis.

As a result, to try to turn round some 130 years worth of essentially independent chess organisation (in Scotland's case), abolish all existing UK 'regional' federations (none of which, including 'England', is entitled to 'national' status, according to Nigel Short's 'citizenship' test) and hope thereby to create a successful basis for a new, all-inclusive GB (and Northern Ireland!?) federation might, I guess, be theoretically possible but more likely an impossible pipedream.

Dutch readers may recall that Camp Zeist in the Netherlands was not long ago 'declared' an area in which Scots Law (distinctly 'national') operated for the purposes of hearing the Lockerbie air disaster appeal case in an internationally 'neutral' polity. More meddle in all of this ancient complexity, Nigel, and, I'm afraid, more muddle. At root, most UK 'nationals' still also closely identify with what we call routinely our home nations and are quite happy at that.

Craig Pritchett
Dunbar, Scotland

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Giri's Non-Existent Soviet Story

The wit of GM Anish Giri, with his Russian background, could make him a successor to Tal. In New In Chess 2014/6, p. 89, he refers to a fanciful drunk GM who made a ludicrous opening move in the Grünfeld.

The late GM Eduard Gufeld did him one better. He told me of a friendly club match in which the lucky top board player paired as Black with Spassky had enjoyed three vodkas too many at supper. The game went thus: 1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 b6 4.fxe5 ♘xe5 5.♘xe5 ♔xe5???!! The master had apparently suffered a mirror-image reversal and thought he was playing a Grünfeld!

Anthony Saidy
Los Angeles, CA, USA

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As Carlsen perseveres, Anand collapses

Norwegian retains world title

Magnus Carlsen was the outspoken favourite, but if Vishy Anand didn't repeat the mistakes from Chennai, he might have a chance in their second World Championship match in Sochi. Wise predictions, expertly spoken. In the end, the Norwegian won 6½-4½, the statistically expected score he had had at the back of his mind right from the start. But it wasn't an easy ride at all. What dramatic turn would the match have taken if Anand had kept a cool head in Game 6? We'll never know. Said Anand: 'It was a tougher match, but in the end I have to admit he was superior. His nerves held up better.'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Arriving in 'Sochi', the host city of the Winter Olympics earlier this year, is a bit of a confusing experience, particularly if you've just spent some days in grey and wintry Moscow. The weather at the Black Sea coast is sunny and even in the beginning of November temperatures hover around 20 degrees Celsius. As the plane descends, you see the mountains, but once you're on the ground you realize that they are somewhere in the distance and that the Rosa Khutor Alpine Resort, where the alpine skiing events took place, is 50 kilometres away from the coast. Starting with the modern airport, everything you see is brand-new. The roads, the railway station, the houses, the apartment buildings and, of course, the futuristic stadiums. The old city of Sochi is nowhere to be seen, for the simple reason that it is 40 kilometres down the road. Now that the Winter Games are over, the new 'Sochi' is largely deserted. Very few houses are inhab-

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ANASTASIA KARLOVICH

A daily ritual. As in Chennai, the Norwegian press were out in force again. In the end they shared the relief and happiness of Magnus Carlsen and his father Henrik.

ited and the number of tourists is negligible. There is a Disneyland-type of amusement park with a hotel in the shape of a castle that apparently was not ready in time for the Games and has never received any guests. Still, at night the building is floodlit, one of the landmarks in the 'Olympic village'. It's tempting to speak of a ghost town, with so many empty streets and buildings, but this description suggests some form of dilapidation and this you don't see. Workers are still finishing spacious villas and a lot of maintenance is being done. It rather feels as if you're moving around in a huge, life-size model of a modern town where all building plans have been worked out in great detail. Only the people still have to arrive.

Hosting the Chess World Championship match is part of the plans to turn Sochi into a permanent venue for major international sports events. In October, a long-cherished Russian dream came true when the first Formula 1 race was held in Sochi. In 2018, Sochi will be one of the host cities of the FIFA World Cup. The match between Carlsen and Anand was probably the first of many more chess events. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that the women's world championship can also be organized here. And Arkady Dvorkovich, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and head of the organizing committee, stressed that Russia is always ready to organize big chess events. To which he subtly added, referring to the criticism of staging the match in Sochi: 'Apparently, other countries don't have the wish or the money to organize such events.'

Still, you wonder if all these events will be enough to bring life to Sochi and pay for the costs of maintaining all the buildings and infrastructure.

The protagonists of the World Championship match, their entourage, the organizers and most of the journalists stayed in the Radisson Blu Paradise Resort and Spa, a five-star hotel with various swimming pools and restaurants, of which a number remained closed due to a lack of guests. In a way the hotel, a mini-cosmos where practically everyone involved in the match lived, was reminiscent of the Hyatt Regency in Chennai where Anand and Carlsen played their first match. The big difference was that leaving the hotel in Chennai meant entering the chaos and turbulence of an Indian metropolis, whereas here only an almost empty boulevard and deserted streets awaited you.

The two delegations occupied a good part of the two wings of the hotel on the eighth floor. To secure their privacy, the players were permanently accompanied by a security guard provided by the organizers. Still, these measures were not quite enough to guarantee the players a quiet stay, undisturbed by other guests. After a

couple of rounds an awkward problem arose when one of the suites on the eighth floor was booked by a newly-wed couple. They proved so much in love that the organizers feared that their passion could be heard in Anand's suite, and after some deliberation a diplomatic mission was sent up to defend the Challenger's peace and quiet.

The games were played in the immense Media Centre of the Winter Games, and it was here that the opening and closing ceremonies took place as well. As in India, the Norwegian press were out in force. Two television channels, NRK and VG TV, broadcast the entire match live, with reporters shooting footage and doing interviews in Sochi, while experts in the studio in Norway commented on the games. In stark contrast to the immense interest in Magnus Carlsen in Norway was the total absence of Indian journalists at the opening ceremony. Not one journalist had come, feeding speculation that Anand's fellow-countrymen had little faith in his chances. In the end, one reporter and one filmmaker made it to Sochi and the match received generous attention in the Indian press, but the general interest was clearly less than last year in Chennai.

At the first press conference, the players looked tense and were not very talkative. Anand said that he liked playing in Russia and that in contrast to Chennai there were no traffic jams in Sochi. And he revealed the names of his seconds: Wojtaszek, Sasikiran and Gajewski. Carlsen tried to provide some entertainment when he succinctly announced his seconds as 'the Dane and the Hammer', and it took the Russian press a while to realize that he was talking about Peter Heine Nielsen and Jon-Ludvig Hammer. He also joked ('What do you think?') when he was asked if he considered himself the favourite in the match, but then wisely added that it doesn't matter what you think. 'If you don't play well, you're not going to win.'

The general impression was that Carlsen was less buoyant and self-confident than last year as a direct result of his unhappiness with his play at the Olympiad in Tromsø and the Sinquefield Cup in Saint Louis. Rather than speak about his play, he was eager to show good play on the board. His first goal was to be less nervous than last year in the initial games when, for instance in Game 2, his hand almost 'stumbled' when he tried to move his c-pawn to c6 on his first move.

Anand obviously hoped to do better this time, certainly after his convincing victory in the Candidates' tournament. As almost anything that could go wrong did go wrong the previous time, many experts predicted a much closer match. Quite typical was what Vladimir Kramnik said, Anand's friend and colleague, who more or less persuaded him to give it another try in the Candidates'. 'I expect a sharper and more interesting match than last time. And the rest is difficult to predict. It's a short match. It is clear that Anand has all the trumps in his hands. He learned a lot of lessons from the previous match. He did many things wrong, strategically and psychologically, it would be very surprising if he hadn't learned his lesson. Then he may be dangerous. I would still say Magnus is the favourite, like 60-40, but I wouldn't exclude another result. Magnus remains the favourite, but he will have more problems with our generation than the new generation. Players of our generation can be more dangerous, because we have some things that he may have less of. With the young guys, in a way, I have the feeling that they more or less play the same chess, but that Magnus is just slightly better in this chess. He is beating them quite confidently, with the exception of Caruana. But I think that Anand is one of the most unpleasant opponents for him now.'

Nigel Short also urged Anand not to make the same mistakes he made in Chennai: 'He should not play baseline tennis, he should play more actively. He has to go to the net.'

> 'Anand said that he liked playing in Russia and that in contrast to Chennai there were no traffic jams in Sochi.'

But China's Ding Liren, at 22 exactly half Anand's age, was less optimistic about the challenger's chances when I asked him what he expected from the match: 'It will be very much the same as last time. I don't see how Anand can have the self-confidence to win.'

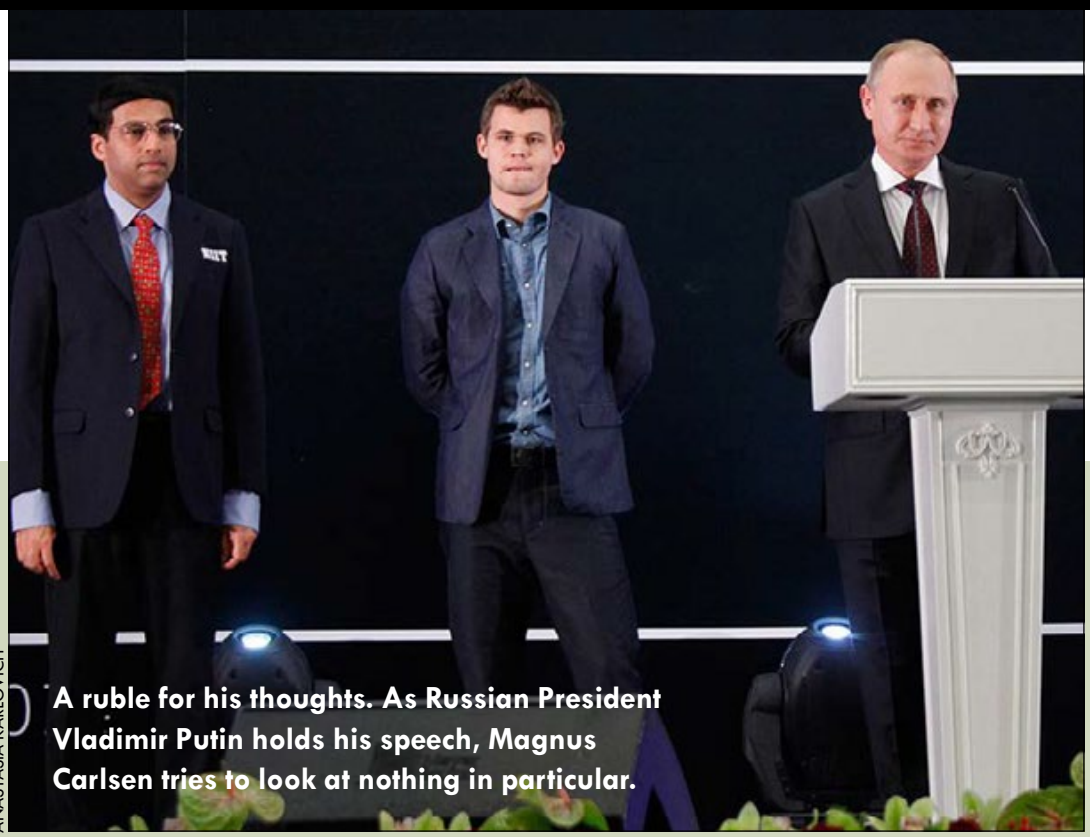
The first blow in Carlsen's favour was the outcome of the drawing of lots. A magician pricked a seemingly empty balloon and when a pigeon emerged it was decided that the defending champion play the first game with Black. Carlsen was very happy with this outcome and his reasoning made sense. According to the rules, the alternating of the colours changes halfway through the match, which would give him White in two consecutive games, Game 6 and Game 7. What's more, drawing Black for the first game meant that he would be White six times in the next 10 games. And as he was secretly convinced that he would be able to finish the match in 11 games, this meant that he had an extra White game overall!

The start of the match could hardly have gone better for the Norwegian. As might have been expected with three seconds that are all 1.d4 players, Anand indeed opened with his queen's pawn. He seemed to get a promising position against Carlsen's Grünfeld, but in the manoeuvring phase Black wriggled free and White's edge evaporated. Perhaps heeding the advice of some of his colleagues, Anand avoided a queen swap,

but it didn't yield him anything, and Carlsen gradually took over the initiative. His 42nd move looked awkward for White, but it was not Carlsen's best chance. He had missed the fine resource with which Anand could force a draw and had failed to see the continuation that would have given him some winning chances. In their optimism, several journalists felt that Carlsen could have taken the lead as early as Game 1, but the champion preferred to be more realistic. A draw with Black looked fine to him and he was happy with the result.

Carlsen did strike in the second game. In a seemingly innocent position, he swung over his queen's rook to the kingside and created problems that Anand failed to cope with. An oversight in a difficult position hastened the end, and after 35 moves he had to resign.

Only two games had been played, and already Anand seemed to be in deep trouble. His play was uncertain and he was one point down against a Carlsen who seemed to know exactly what he was doing. The Norwegian journalists looked at each other with a mix of happiness and disbelief: was the match essentially over? At least one person disagreed. On the first free day I went to see Boris Spassky, one of the World Champions (both male and female) who had been invited to come to Sochi. Following a stroke, his left arm is paralyzed and he is confined to a wheelchair as he finds it hard to walk. But his mind is as sharp and original as ever. When we talked about Anand's play, he said without any hesitation that his moment in the match would come and that it was way too early to draw conclusions – which didn't detract from the fact that he very much hoped that Carlsen would win. As he put it in his inimitable way: 'For me Magnus is very funny. He is like a gnome, who has grown from the earth. A good ghost from underground. Always mysterious, but always fighting.' And he added: 'Magnus was born for chess.



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A ruble for his thoughts. As Russian President Vladimir Putin holds his speech, Magnus Carlsen tries to look at nothing in particular.

When Magnus met Vladimir

Special guest at the prize-giving ceremony in Sochi was Russia's president Vladimir Putin. The first time ever, the organizers FIDE proudly pointed out, that a head of state attended the closing of a Chess World Championship match. Moscow-based English journalist **Tim Wall** was in the hall and listened to the speeches and watched the body language. Has chess become a matter of national importance again in Russia? And was it on purpose that Magnus Carlsen did not mention either Kirsan Ilyumzhinov or Vladimir Putin in his words of thanks?

It was 6.45 p.m. on Tuesday, exactly 47 hours after Vishy Anand resigned Game 11, and three-quarters of an hour after the scheduled start of the closing ceremony. For the assembled crowd of dignitaries, FIDE officials, players and Norwegian envoys – not to mention a posse of chess-playing kids wielding autograph books – the tension was building in the Sochi Olympics Media Centre.

When will Putin show? For the Norwegians, the wait was puzzling and frustrating, but for those who have lived in Russia for most of the Putin years (myself included), this is no big deal. The president is famously late for all meetings, keeping everyone from Barack Obama to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II waiting anything from 30 minutes to several hours.

Eventually, the master of ceremonies, after getting the nod from the presidential security service, announced that everyone should take their seats. Anand and Carlsen

somewhat sheepishly shuffled to their marks on stage and Putin strode in a minute or two later to deliver his speech. While Anand looked Putin straight in the eye with a friendly smile, Carlsen's reaction was more awkward. After looking in just about every other direction, he finally gave a vigorous nod of the head and shook hands – while somehow managing to avoid eye contact.

While Putin was talking, I somehow imagined not Carlsen, but an insouciant Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory, listening to Bill Gates give a lecture on religion, equally skeptical about a Supreme Being and the Windows operating system. Instead of Sheldon, read Magnus, and for Bill Gates/the Supreme Being, well… you get the picture.

After Putin's speech – formal but courteous – Kirsan Ilyumzhinov put the champion's wreath on a relieved but still awkward Magnus, and Magnus came up to speak.

The various controversies of previous months – from the bitterly contested FIDE presidential election in Tromsø, where Carlsen supported Kasparov, to the near-forfeit as Magnus looked likely to pull out during the Sinquefield Cup (he was disappointed over the lack of other bids and wary of the politics involved with Sochi, by various accounts) – have been leading up to this moment. And yet, it wasn't what Magnus said in his speech of thanks, it was what he didn't.

'First of all, a big thanks to the organizers, AGON and the Russian Chess Federation', Magnus said. 'The organization has been very good and my team and I have been treated in the best possible way. Thanks to my team, everyone who has helped me – my father, my seconds, the rest of my family, the doctor and the cook.'

His doctor and the cook? By now I was starting to wonder when he would mention the other people on the stage… 'Thanks also to my esteemed opponent, Mr Anand, who gave it his all during this match. It's been a pleasure to do battle with you and I wish you the best for the future.'

At this point, when it finally became clear that Magnus wasn't going to thank President Putin, Kirsan or FIDE, both men looked distinctly uncomfortable. Kirsan more or less blanched, and Putin's jaw even dropped open momentarily (I checked the video footage from Norway's *VG* TV later, but it really happened).

Magnus finished: 'And last but not least, thanks to all the chess fans following the match from around the world. This is all for you!'

Of course, being the consummate politician he is, Putin quickly recovered his composure, breaking into applause, and for the rest of the event acted the perfect host. Meanwhile, Kirsan just looked forlorn. Anand, standing between the two men, was so stunned he forgot immediately to clap.

> 'His doctor and the cook? By now I was starting to wonder when he would mention the other people on the stage…'

Russian and Norwegian reactions to Magnus's speech were quite different – protocol at any Russian event, from a business forum to a birthday party, dictates that you thank all official personages present, and the higher the official, the more fulsome the thanks, particularly if that official is responsible for the funding or sponsorship of the event. It's the culture, or as John Travolta said of Europe in *Pulp Fiction*, 'the little differences.'

Putin later called Magnus 'a genius', when asked by a Norwegian journalist what he thought of the new champion. In response, when told of Putin's remark, Magnus just said, 'No comment' and smiled. Espen Agdestein, Magnus's manager, insisted afterwards that it was never Magnus's 'intention to be impolite'. In Chennai he didn't mention the governor who was responsible for the organization of the match either, as in general he prefers to stay away from politics. Agdestein also emphasized that Team Carlsen was very happy with the organization of the event, and was looking forward to working with Agon on the next match, which Kirsan announced would be in the United States in 2016.

While Agdestein's words usually would ring true (in many Western European countries we wouldn't necessarily expect sportspeople to thank politicians), you feel that Team Carlsen as a whole must have known that Sochi happened very largely due to Putin's support. And given the charged atmosphere surrounding the decision to play in Sochi (Agdestein said: 'Magnus was really prepared to say no, but then changed his mind because he simply wanted to play chess'), over political issues such as Ukraine, and the bad feeling over the FIDE elections, it is logical to assume that Magnus's omission of thanks was a carefully calibrated and planned move. His behaviour was clearly interpreted by the Norwegian journalists in Sochi as a muted form of protest, albeit one where he could claim to not be giving any offence.

The Russian media, particularly TV, just ignored Carlsen's omission and focused instead on Putin's appearance and association with the World Championship.

On the surface then, the impression was of awkwardness on both sides. But as I always feel about Russia and the West, whatever real problems exist between the two sides tend to be magnified by cultural misunderstandings. To take a small historical detour, it's worth recalling the words of Winston

Churchill about Russia. He said famously in an October 1939 radio broadcast (although people tend to quote only the middle, memorable part): 'I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.'
It also holds up well when you consider many of Putin's actions today. Holding the World Championship in Sochi clearly fits into a plan that Putin sees as being in Russia's national interest, in my opinion, for three clear reasons: 1) It helps to build on the idea of Sochi as an important destination for major international sporting and other events, reinforcing the prestige that Russia feels from hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics there; 2) Associating Russia with the World Championship recalls Russia's glorious Soviet-era chess traditions at a time when many symbols of Soviet power and influence are being revived; and 3) There seems to be a clear plan to use chess around the world as a tool of soft power, or soft diplomacy, to improve Russia's image – as a major centre of world culture.
Putin spelled out his aims after the closing ceremony in a small meeting with Carlsen and Anand. At that meeting, over a cup of tea, Putin said that he hoped to organize the Women's World Championship also in Sochi, raising the prospect of the city becoming a more accessible (and warmer!) alternative venue for major events to Khanty-Mansiysk, and reiterated what he said in the closing ceremony – that he wanted to organize more strong chess events in Russia.
But he also emphasized soft diplomacy: 'I very much hope that chess, as well as other sports, will be a good bridge between countries, between people who will contribute to the solution of problems not only in sports, but also in the world, in life, in the relations between the two countries.'

Putin's comments tend to suggest that, despite all the tensions between Russia and the West over continuing fighting in Eastern Ukraine, Putin and others in the Russian leadership still do care about rebuilding ties with the West, and that – however bizarrely – chess could be an useful instrument in that. In that context, when Kirsan announced that the next match would be in the US, this may signal soft diplomacy between Moscow and Washington.

> 'The supervisory board of the Russian Chess Federation now reads like a who's who of government and business'

The soft diplomacy aim is also supported by changes afoot in Russian chess. Over the past few years, there has been a massive increase in chess sponsorship here, funded by companies (state and non-state) and wealthy individuals – but all clearly with official support and encouragement. And in a key development, changes in the management of Russian chess show that it has become serious government business – practically coming under Putin's personal purview.
For example, the supervisory board of the Russian Chess Federation now reads like a who's who of government and business: the chairman is Dmitry Peskov, Putin's press spokesman, and also serving on the board are: Arkady Dvorkovich, a deputy prime minister who is also a strong amateur chessplayer; Gennady Timchenko, a billionaire oil and gas magnate and former judo partner of Putin's targeted by US sanctions over Ukraine; Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu and Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin (both of whom have been tipped as future candidates for president).
This board of political heavyweights isn't all, however. The Russian Chess Federation has another ace in the hole: its new president, former chess trainer Andrei Filatov, is another very serious and well-connected player in Russian business. With a background in ports, rail transport and construction, Filatov

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In the presence of four World Champions, Vladimir Putin hinted at the possible role of chess as an instrument in soft diplomacy.

(a business partner of Timchenko's) is worth $1.2 billion according to Forbes, and his companies were responsible for much of the construction work for the Sochi Olympics. He is also a serious art collector, with ambitions to open a permanent Russian art collection in London, according to an interview he gave to CNN this summer, where he talked of the need for soft diplomacy and increasing understanding of Russian culture in the West. Voted in as a FIDE vice president at Tromsø, he is also very much seen as a new power in the organization – although he has insisted he does not want to take Kirsan's post. Talking with Filatov in Sochi (where he headed the organizing committee), I got the vibe that he is genuinely into promoting chess as a way to ease geopolitical tensions through cultural ties.

Putin's new plans to support chess currently don't seem yet to be widely appreciated in the West. For many years, FIDE's identification with Kirsan has understandably made many sceptical that change could come about without his replacement. And yet there could be a new era around the corner, where a bigger role is taken by influential business leaders, with support from senior politicians, leaving a lesser, more ceremonial role for figures such as Kirsan. Russia's leading role in chess may not be new, or welcome in the West, but at a time of increasing difficulties in attracting Western commercial sponsorship, new corporate backers from Russia (and possibly China?) could be the music of the future. Yet the positive PR message doesn't seem to be getting out there yet. Putin delivering important messages at cosy chats over tea is a staple of Russian TV, yet it was not picked up by Western media – maybe because it didn't come with good pictures. Instead of using the occasion of Carlsen holding up a trophy, Putin delivered his comments at a semi-closed meeting, sitting around a table. As most TV executives in competitive markets will tell you, you need something a bit sexier. Now if Putin and Magnus had ridden horseback together with their shirts off, or swam in the sea at Sochi, that would definitely have made prime time TV news around the world…

Such chumminess may be a way off. Yet Putin did seem to get through to Magnus on one level – by telling funny stories. Magnus later explained to Norway's *TV2*: 'It was nice. We drank tea and told old pirate stories.' It's not quite clear what 'tall tales' Magnus was told, but perhaps it was about how the Vikings played a key role in forming the Russian state and culture 1,000 years ago. Maybe the Putin charm offensive has started to work on Magnus, after all… ■

He was a gift from Caissa. I like the way Magnus plays. He's still a child.' The latter remark was an interesting echo of what Magnus himself said at the press conference when he was asked about his need to unwind during chess competitions by playing basketball and football: 'At heart I am still a child. I play all these sports for fun.'

Spassky's hunch became reality sooner than expected when Anand won Game 3 with a piece of opening preparation reminiscent of the match against Kramnik in Bonn in 2008. He barely had to think. The main thing was to remember why the position was winning and how to convert his advantage as accurately as possible. Anand admitted that his 24th move was 'probably' still part of his preparation and that he might even have looked further.

His victory rekindled hopes in India. After all, he hadn't won a single game last year, and as someone calculated, this was his first classical win over Carlsen after a gap of 1432 days!

Commentator Sergey Shipov spoke about 'one big black hole' in Carlsen's preparation. Carlsen himself didn't say much about what had gone wrong, but it's hard to imagine that his seconds had not dealt with this line. After all, Mickey Adams, who was revealed as one of his further seconds at the end of the match, had played it against Aronian last year. As Carlsen said that in the end no one else but he himself is responsible, there is good reason to believe that he was given the information, but hadn't looked at it properly.

The way both teams reacted to this sudden turn of events was remarkable. As only the Italian restaurant in the hotel was open that night, they ended up having their meals within earshot of each other. From merely watching them it was easy to draw erroneous conclusions about what had happened in the match that day. Anand's team entered with stern faces, avoiding eye-contact with the other guests. Silently they finished their meals, which had already been ordered before they arrived. The occasional word was exchanged, but they mainly concentrated on their food, and after 15 minutes they left in a hurry, absorbed in thought. The message was clear: the match had turned around and they were going to do everything within their power to capitalize on this new situation.

How different was the mood at the Norwegian table. The conversation was loud, jokes were made, and it wasn't long before Magnus, who had been hanging listlessly in his chair at first, also chimed in. Apparently he wanted to prove what he had already said at the press conference: 'In a match like this you shouldn't overreact to wins or losses.' Still, the initiative in the match seemed to have shifted. In Game 4, Carlsen achieved nothing against Anand's Sicil-

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Boris Spassky was one of the former World Champions that had been invited to Sochi. The Norwegian press loved the warmth with which he spoke about Magnus Carlsen.

ian, and at some point things even began to look promising for Black. But a draw it was and that was fine with the champion, even though he admitted that he had played 'terribly'.

In Game 5, Anand showed admirable preparation in a rare line of the Queen's Indian. Defending accurately, Carlsen saved the draw. In the meantime, the popularity of the match in Norway grew in tandem with the rising tension. The Mayor of Oslo held a public plea to the 55,000 civil servants working for his city, urging them not to neglect their duties. There was nothing wrong with occasionally casting an eye at the live transmission from Sochi, but they should be careful that their fellow-citizens did not suffer from their interest in the match. The drama reached its peak in Game 6, the first of the two consecutive Whites that Carlsen had been looking forward to right from the start. An unfortunate opening choice left Anand with a difficult position, but it is not for these problems that his game will be remembered. While they were both making up their mind about the positional strategy they had to follow, there was this one fleeting moment, this one move, when Anand could have won a solid pawn and probably the game. Carlsen saw what he had done the moment he had put his king on a fatal square. Blind panic hit him, but he tried to maintain his cool. That must have been the longest minute in the match for him. Anand rechecked his plan, played his intended move and only then saw what a chance he had missed.

Sergey Karjakin, who had come to Sochi for the Tal Memorial blitz tournament, watched this unique moment in World Championship history from a short distance. As he tweeted: 'When Magnus blundered with ♔d2. I was in the playing hall and wanted to scream ♘xe5!!! It could have changed chess history I guess.' This missed opportunity had a devastating effect on Anand. He could no longer put up the stiffest resistance and was punished by Carlsen's meticulous play. Instead of sensationally taking the lead, the challenger was one point down with three Black games ahead of him in the next five games. Saying that this case of reciprocal chess blindness decided the match would certainly be an exaggeration, but it may be close to the truth that it ended Anand's chances of regaining the title.

In Game 7, Carlsen tested his opponent's resilience by playing 122 moves before resigning himself to a draw. But Anand defended actively and accurately and didn't flinch, showing once again that he was a far tougher opponent this time than last year.

Anand's main problem now was that every draw took his opponent closer to the desired 6½ points. Another opportunity was missed in Game 8, when Carlsen showed excellent preparation and comfortably made a draw with Black. And the next game even ended in a draw after they had played a little over one hour, when Carlsen admitted that he had achieved nothing.

Game 10 also saw a draw after good defending by the World Champion, putting added pressure on Anand. In Game 11 he knew that he needed at least a draw to stay in the match. Playing Black and knowing that a loss would immediately be fatal, Anand managed to pull himself together once more. As Anish Giri shows in his analysis of the game, Anand played very well until he let himself be tempted by an exchange sacrifice. 'A nervous decision,' Anand called it at the press conference. And Carlsen opined that he prefers taking material to giving it. He conducted the rest of the game with great precision, sensing that this was the moment to end the match. In 11 games – all according to plan.

With the title secured, Magnus Carlsen could reveal a couple of things that he had remained silent about for understandable reasons. Although he was not looking for any excuses for his play in the final part of the match, he said that he had not been feeling too well. And he mentioned a number of people that had helped him in addition to 'the Dane and the Hammer': Mickey Adams, Laurent Fressinet, Ian Nepomniachtchi and Vladimir Potkin. During the meeting he had with Kasparov in Oslo before the match they had also talked about chess, and Kasparov had regularly been in touch with Peter Heine Nielsen during the match.

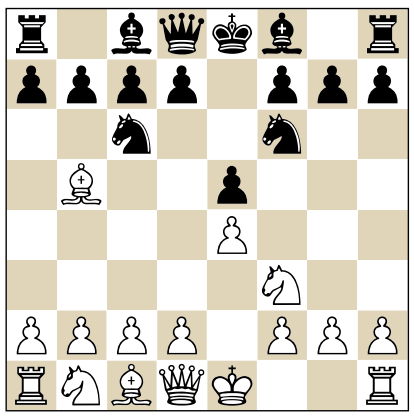
The 13th World Champion was the first to belittle his contribution in a tweet: 'I'm not sure Magnus has much to learn from anyone, but not many have world championship experience, so I was happy to lend any support.'

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RL 7.2 – C65
Magnus Carlsen
Viswanathan Anand
Sochi 2014 (2)

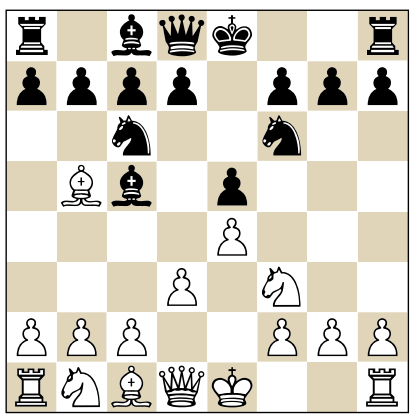
1.e4 e5
This didn't come as a surprise to me, and no doubt not to Carlsen either. In the past, Vishy usually relied on the Najdorf, but Magnus masterfully avoids the sharp fight there as well (his pet 3.♗b5+ comes to mind), so why bother?

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6
For the moment, the Berlin Defence is the most fireproof opening there is. The first sign for Vishy that something might be wrong was the fact that the Berlin Wall fell on this exact day 25 years ago...



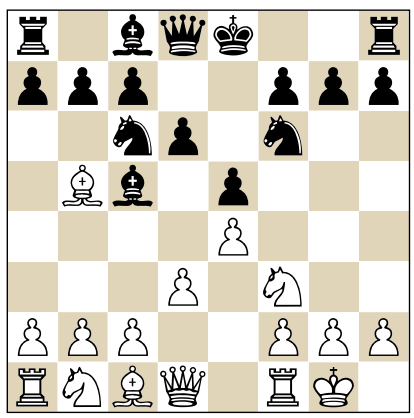
4.d3
Not going for the famous endgame that arises after 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 and which currently enjoys a reputation of being impregnable.

4...♗c5



5.0-0
The first little surprise. The main move here is 5.c3, avoiding the option of ...♘d4. Another line I would have expected from Magnus is 5.♗xc6, which is quite popular and far from exhausted yet.
To explain the future course of the game, let me delve into the theoretical discussion in the main line here: 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.♘bd2 a6. This used to be the good old main move, until Peter Svidler came up with an interesting plan: 8.♗xc6!? bxc6 9.♖e1!?, not going for d4 just yet, but aiming for a slow plan with ♘f1-g3, ♗e3, which surprisingly turned out to be quite venomous.
In reply to this, Vladimir Kramnik, the Godfather of this opening system, came up with 7...♘e7!?, allowing what people thought was unacceptable: a seemingly strong and unchallengeable pawn centre. When that seemed to work, the theoreticians got stuck...

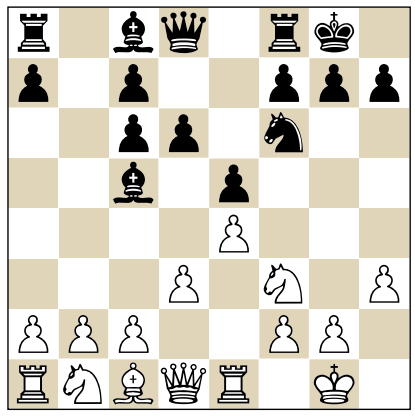
5...d6
Asking White what he has gained by not playing c3. The other main move is 5...♘d4, which is more principled in a way.



6.♖e1!?
The first real surprise, even though the move and the idea behind it are hardly threatening in themselves. But then again, that's not Magnus's approach to the opening.

6...0-0 7.♗xc6!?
The idea of executing the 'Svidler plan' with ♗xc6 bxc6 without waiting for ...a6 (which would never happen, of course; remember ...♘e7!) had occurred to people before. This is just another implementation. Obviously, White can't count on any real advantage here, or any advantage at all, but he does have some play of his own and, more importantly, from now on Vishy had to start thinking.

7...bxc6 8.h3
Always a useful move, but particularly here, since ...♘g4 followed by ...f5 was already a possible threat.



8...♖e8
A healthy move. True to his style, Vishy plays in the centre. Such a simple strategy is quite efficient in a sound position like this one.
Another plan which deserves attention is a little riskier, but also quite valid – playing for the ...f7-f5 break: 8...h6 9.♘bd2 ♘h7. This position arose by transposition in a game between grandmasters Stevic and Handke in 2013: 10.♘b3 ♗b6 11.a4 a6 12.a5 ♗a7 13.d4!? (logical, as ...f5 was already in the air) 13...exd4 14.♘bxd4 ♗d7 15.♗e3 ♖e8, and the knight is ready to get back to the centre via f6, g5 or f8, with a sound position for Black. The preceding moves weren't necessary, but they did occur in the above-mentioned game.

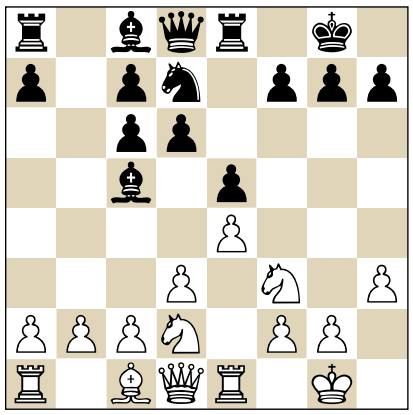
9.♘bd2
I thought one of the points of the move order in the game was to allow White to play ♗e3 before deciding on the future of the b1-knight. This idea, I believe, is quite valid, but here Magnus decided against it, possibly because of 9.♗e3 ♗xe3! 10.♖xe3 ♘h5! when the e5-pawn is protected by the rook, safeguarding Black from ♘xe5.

9...♘d7

MARIA EMELIANOVA

A magician did the trick. Magnus Carlsen was very happy to have Black in the first game. In a match of 11 games, which he secretly envisioned, he would have an extra White.

Once again, just one of many possibilities. 9...♘h5!? is a bit more adventurous; no longer with the idea of ...f5, as the rook has left the f-file, but with the idea of ...♕f6 and ...♘f4. And besides, any move was possible: 9...h6, 9...♗b6, and what not? The point of the position is that Black should choose a set-up and then react to White's plan accordingly.



10.♘c4!?

A debatable move, as the knight could go the other way too. After 10.♘f1 Magnus possibly didn't like the idea of ...d5, although then the knight on d7 isn't ideally placed, closing the way for the c8-bishop. Anyway, whatever way you go, the position is playable, but we can't speak of any opening advantage whatsoever. But as Magnus said at the press conference: 'This is fine by me.'

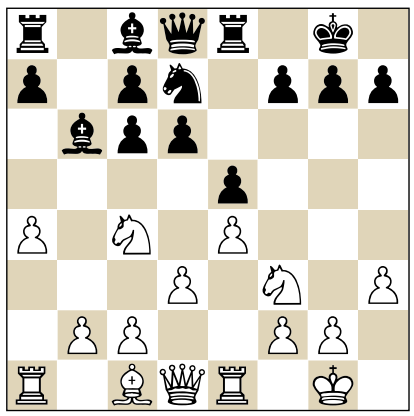
10...♗b6

Again, a very solid choice, anticipating c3-d4, just in case. And again, not the only move.

10...♘f8 seems more logical, with the idea of transferring the knight to g6 and eventually prepare ...d5. Here Vishy probably disliked 11.c3!?, introducing the idea of d4, with complicated play, as Black can proceed with, for example, 11...♗e6.

11.a4

White doesn't have all that many plans available to him, so he has to create something to play for. Now he might try to threaten to trap the bishop with a5, followed by c3-b4.



11...a5

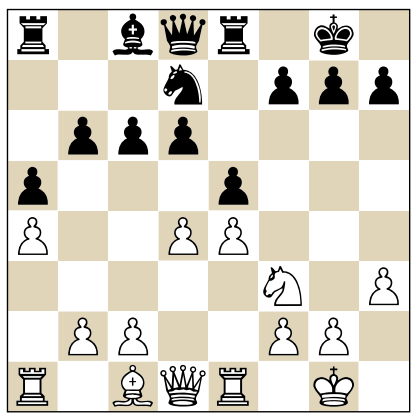
A natural reaction. The pawn structure on the queenside now gets slightly weakened, but it is not a big deal. Nevertheless Magnus decided to exploit it by taking the bishop.

12.♘xb6!?

If White plays slowly, let's say with ♗d2, Black can proceed with ...♘f8-g6 and finish his development without any problems. Potentially he might aim for ...d5 as well.

12...cxb6 13.d4

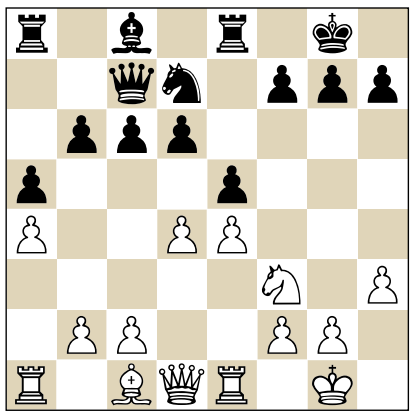
White is obviously playing for something extremely small, but then again, he doesn't have all that many active options or ideas. The price you pay for playing the opening pretty unambitiously.



13...♕c7

A fine move, preparing ...♘f8.

A more direct approach, suggested by commentator Peter Svidler, joined by my girlfriend (Sopiko Guramishvili – ed.) was 13...c5!?. I must say I like this move, as it asks White the question of how to proceed? 14.d5 (this is principled, although I am not sure I would have played it as White. Black has the attractive plan of ...f5, and it's hard for White to come up with a plan of his own. After 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 the structure a5-b6-c5-d6 looks rather funny, but there is no way for White to exploit those weaknesses. Black has solved all of his opening problems, which were never really there in the first place) 14...♘f8, although ...f5 may not be such a big threat, for example: 15.♘d2 ♘g6 16.♘c4 f5 17.exf5 ♗xf5 18.♖a3, with an unclear position.



14.♖a3!

You need one such move to create 'a game', to exert some pressure. It's not enough to just play 'some trashy sideline'. Many try, but only Magnus succeeds. Nor is it enough for your first name to be Magnus and your last name Carlsen (although it does help a lot). The key is that at some point, in an equal position in which nothing is going on, you need to come up with one creative idea, find this one little threat or little manoeuvre. Here Magnus introduces the idea of ♖a3-g3. No, it won't win the game. But it does create one.

14...♘f8

A solid move; the knight is heading for g6.

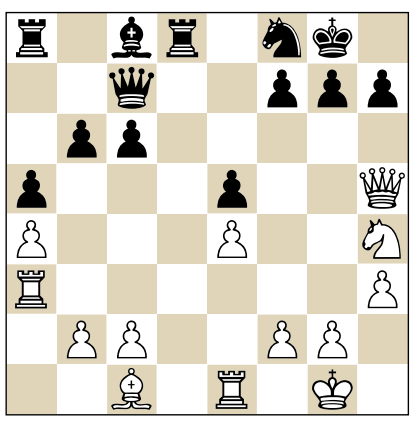
15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♘h4

Clearing the path for the rook.

16...♖d8

In exchange for the initiative that White is slowly building up on the kingside, Black gets control of the only open file.

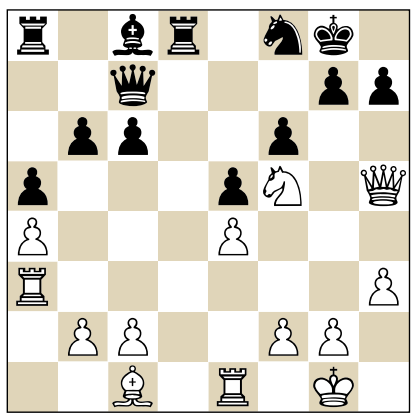
17.♕h5



17...f6! 18.♘f5

Correctly judging that exchanging this knight wouldn't solve all Black's problems, as the f8-knight would be dominated by the pawn on f5.

18.♖g3 would probably come down to the same thing in most lines.



18...♗e6?

This move looks reasonably natural, but in fact it is a major mistake. Vishy saw the alternative, but made the wrong choice. He may have missed Carlsen's 20th move, a painful shot.

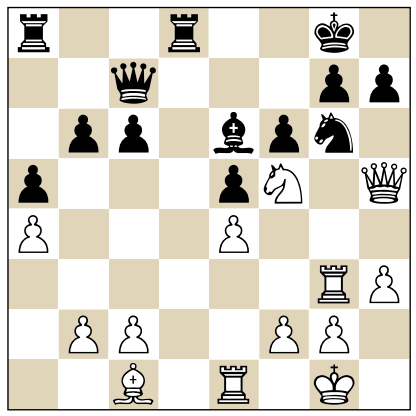
The correct plan was to install the knight on e6, which would be sufficient to protect the king. After the game the players agreed that the better move was 18...♕f7! 19.♕e2 (19.♕g4!?) 19...♘e6! (White can still tease Black a little by switching to the queenside: 19...♗a6 would be met by the neat 20.♖g3!! ♗xe2? 21.♘h6+! ♔h8 22.♘xf7+!) 20.♕c4!?.

The best way altogether was to simply install the knight on e6 with 18...♘e6, or 18...♔h8! first, and after 19.♖g3 ♘e6! White pretty much runs out of any serious attacking ideas (in the worst case, ♖g4-h4 can be met by ...♘f8 back).

Having said that, Magnus hasn't burnt any bridges and the position is equal. Black has the d-file for now, but White can always regroup and regain it. In the future all major pieces would get exchanged and a draw would be likely. But once again, that's a 'what if', and back on move 18, it was Anand who was under pressure.

19.♖g3 ♘g6

19...♖d7 doesn't solve the problems: 20.♗h6!? ♘g6 21.h4!. A nice trick, which will re-appear on move 20. 21...gxh6. And now simply 22.♕xh6, with the deadly threat of h5!.

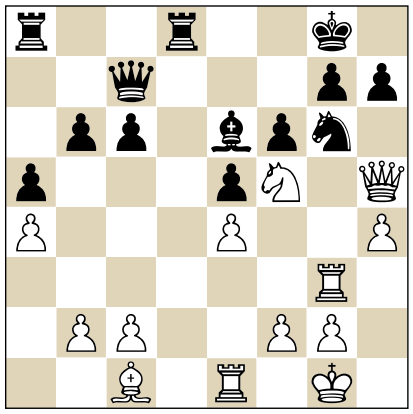


20.h4!

Simple and strong. I think this was the shot Vishy had missed. Now there is the simple threat of withdrawing the queen, followed by h4-h5, and the more complicated move 21.♗h6!.

The possibility of 20.♗h6!? was pointed out by press officer Anastasia Karlovich. A nice tactical shot, but as Magnus explained, it doesn't seem to be so clear: 20...gxh6 (20...♖d7 21.h4! is the same position, as after 19... ♖d7) 21.♖xg6+ hxg6 22.♕xg6+ ♔f8 23.♕xf6+ ♕f7. Here Magnus saw the perpetual with ♕h8+. White can play for more, but it is not clear at all: 24.♕xh6+ ♔e8 25.♕h8+ ♕f8 (25...♔d7 26.♖d1+ ♔c7 27.♕xe5+ ♔b7 28.♘d6+!) 26.♕xe5 ♔f7 27.♘d4 ♖xd4 28.♕xd4 ♕b4, and Black is very much in the game, although I am sure I would still pick White.

'The key is that at some point, in an equal position in which nothing is going on, you need to come up with one creative idea, find this one little threat or little manoeuvre.'



20...♗xf5

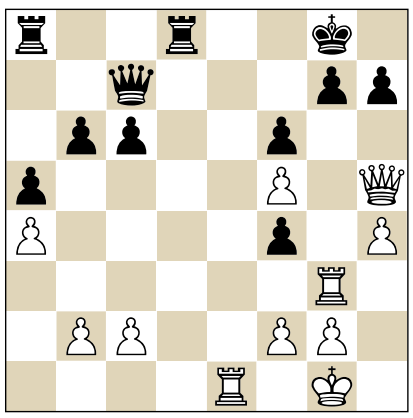
This was criticized by some people. True, it leads to a bad position, but the alternatives look gloomy, too. After 20...♖d7, 21.♕g4 is not easy to meet, but 21.♗h6! is even more painful.

20...♔h8!! as pointed out by Peter Svidler, is quite clever. But first of all, he didn't believe it either and secondly, there is a simple queen retreat and the problems remain: 21.♖xg6 (but there is also 21.♕g4!? and 21.♕f3!?) 21...♕f7!. In fact, this might have been a better way, and it would also have impressed Magnus...

21.exf5 ♘f4

Now many pieces come off, but the situation is clarified. Black is under pressure.

22.♗xf4 exf4



23.♖c3

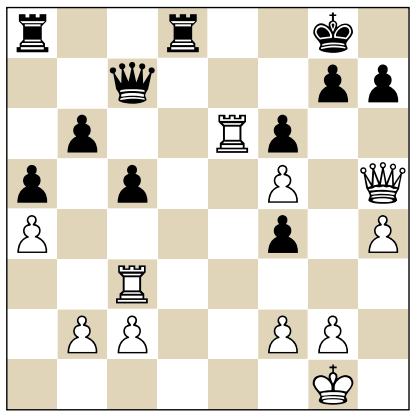
Black has some back-rank problems and many weaknesses: the c6- and b6-pawns, and the f4-pawn is about to fall like a ripe apple; you just need to shake the tree. Nor is the rook on e6 going to be there forever. The only thing preventing White from claiming that he is winning is the slightly misplaced rook on c3.

NEW IN CHESS

The huge Main Media Centre was the venue for the Carlsen-Anand match. As everywhere else in Sochi there was room enough for everyone.

23.♖d3 is a cheap trap, which proves ineffective after 23...h6! (and obviously not 23...♖xd3?? 24.♖e8+!).

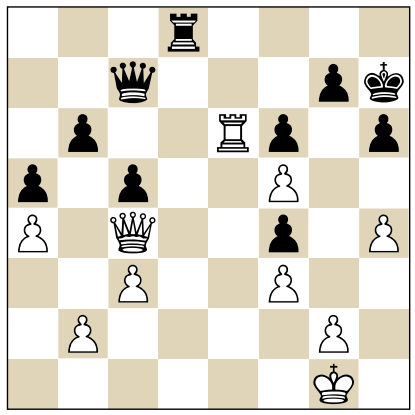
23...c5 24.♖e6



24...♖ab8?

This is a blunder. As Anand admitted, he had forgotten about the idea of ♖c4!.

24...h6! was called for, in order for Black to be able to activate the d8-rook: 25.♕f3! (this is precise, touching the a8-rook. The immediate 25.♖c4 doesn't seem to work: 25...♖d4! 26.♕f3 ♖ad8! 27.♖xd4 cxd4 28.♕b3 ♔h7 29.♕xb6 ♕xb6 30.♖xb6 ♖c8, with massive exchanges and a draw) 25...♖ac8 and now 26.♖c4! ♖d4 27.c3! ♖xc4 28.♕d5 ♔h7 (as ♖e8+ and ♕g8 mate was threatened) 29.♕xc4 ♖d8 30.f3!.

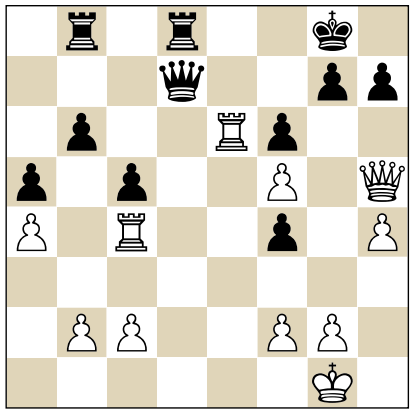


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

If Black now sits and waits, White will move around, trying to combine threats to the b6-pawn with various other ones. For now the king on h7 is pretty safe, but it will potentially find itself in a mating net: 30...♖b8! 31.♔h2 ♕b7! 32.♕xf4 b5. Creating some counterplay, with decent chances of survival. Black has a much better version of the game.

25.♖c4! Of course. Now that the second rook has found an ideal spot for itself, Black is doomed.

25...♕d7!?



26.♔h2!

Obviously avoiding ...♕d1+. From here on in, Magnus ignores the f4-pawn. It is doomed and not as important as the domination along the e-file.

26...♖f8 27.♖ce4

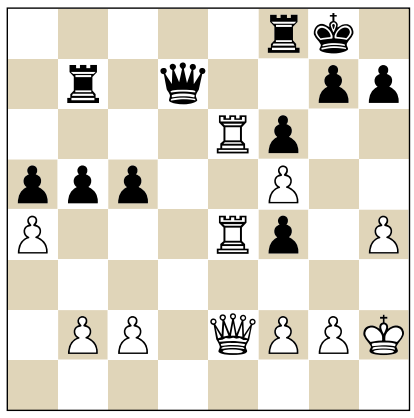
White dominates the e-file and has better pieces, whereas Black has many weak pawns. Black is basically lost.

27...♖b7 28.♕e2

From this point on, the question was what would be the more practical way of converting this major advantage. Magnus missed the tactic with 31...♕d6! after 31.♖e7, so his technical difficulties started at this point. From that point of view, b3 or ♕f3 immediately would have been more appropriate.

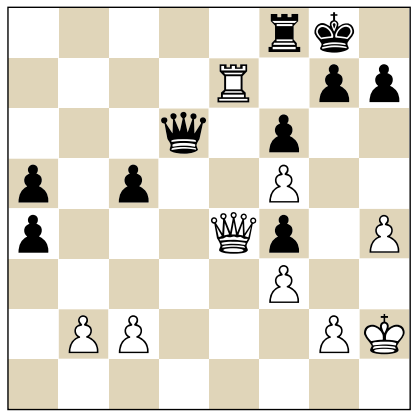
28...b5!?

The only chance.



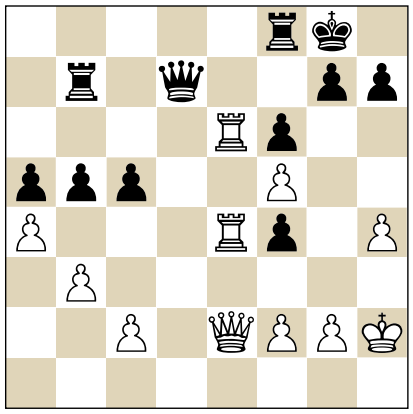
29.b3?!

Magnus wanted to keep the position as it was, since he didn't see a forced solution. There was one, however, albeit by no means an easy one. There was 29.♖e7! ♕d6! 30.f3! ♖xe7 31.♖xe7 bxa4 32.♕e4!.



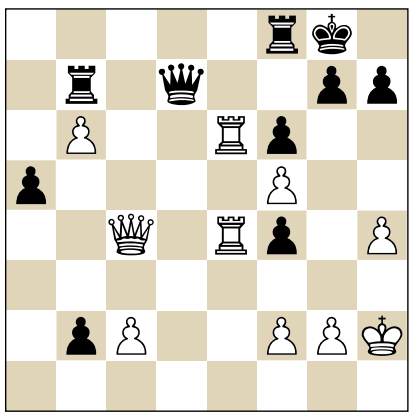
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

To be honest, I didn't really understand why this position is winning at first. It turns out the threat is ♕b7 (remember this idea!!). And after 32...♔h8 33.♖e8! (threatening ♕d3!) 33...♔g8 can be met by 34.♕c4+, so Black is just lost here.



29...bxa4

Here 29...c4 looked strong to me, but the machine points out the brilliant solution 30.axb5! cxb3 31.b6! b2 32.♕c4! and the b2-pawn is caught, while the b6-pawn has a bright future ahead of it:



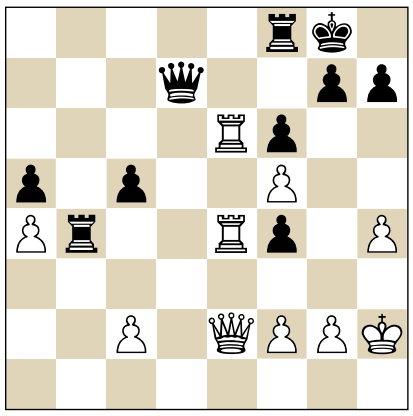
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32...♔h8 (32...b1♕ 33.♖e8+ ♕f7 34.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 35.♕c8+ is mate) 33.♕b3, and White is winning. But I wonder if the players had seen this line, because then 29...c4!? would have looked quite tempting.

30.bxa4

There were other options, e.g. playing against the weak pawns. Magnus plays for domination along the e-file. Understandably so.

30...♖b4

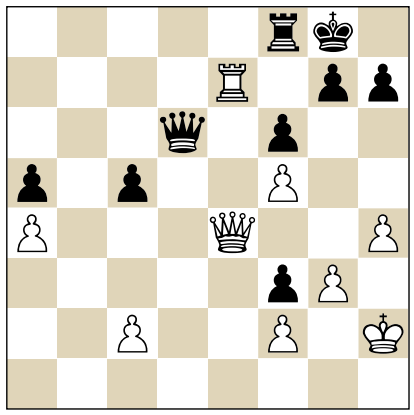


31.♖e7 31.c4!? was an idea of Svidler's. It was my first instinct too, but Black doesn't have to resign here: 31...♖bb8 (as 31...♕xa4? runs into 32.♖e7), and the a4-pawn is hanging. White should of course be on top, but he will have to start calculating variations and even the computer doesn't say that his advantage is decisive.

31...♕d6 32.♕f3 32.f3! was stronger in view of the chance Black gets on move 34. This position is winning.

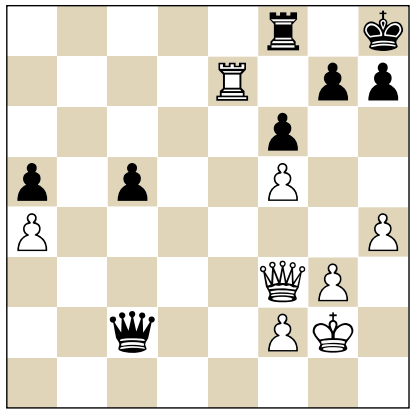
32...♖xe4 33.♕xe4 f3+ 34.g3

The position seems hopeless (especially if you see the threat of ♕b7), but in reality it is not.



34...h5?? An oversight that loses at once. 34...♕d4 can be met by 35.♕xf3!, when 35...♕xa4? loses to 36.♕b7 ♕g4 37.♕d5+ ♔h8 38.♕f7 – a recurring theme in the position. 35...♔h8! keeps the game going, though.

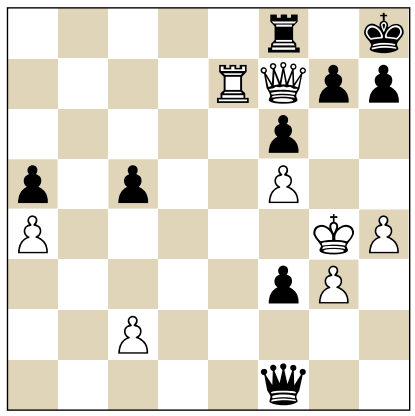
The move called for was 34...♕d2! Vishy would surely have played it if he had seen the long line that follows in the variation with 35.♕e6+ ♔h8 36.♕f7. After 34...♕d2, 35.♕xf3 is probably objectively best: 35...♕xc2 36.♔g2 ♔h8!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and the game has just started all over again.

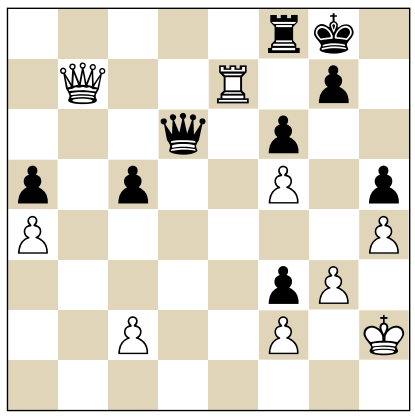
But 35.♕e6+ is of course the critical test: 35...♔h8 36.♕f7 (36.♕e3!) 36...♕xf2+ 37.♔h3 ♕f1+ 38.♔g4, and since there is no 38...♕c4+, the position seems lost, but...



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

38...h5+!! 39.♕xh5+ ♔g8 40.♕g6 ♕c4+ 41.♔h5 (after 41.♔xf3 ♕f1+! draws: 42.♔g4 ♕d1+! 43.♔h3 ♕h1+ 44.♔g4 ♕d1+) 41...♖f7!. In fact, Peter Svidler had seen this entire line, but before he could reach any conclusion, Vishy blundered. Here Black has just earned himself a draw: 42.♖e8+ ♖f8 43.♖e7 ♖f7.

35.♕b7!



Oops. Now a curious dialogue ensued between the commentators.

Sopiko: 'How does Black defend his g7-pawn?'

Peter: '.....'

Players shake hands

Peter: 'He doesn't.'

Game over.

Black resigned and Magnus Carlsen took the leads, 1½-½.

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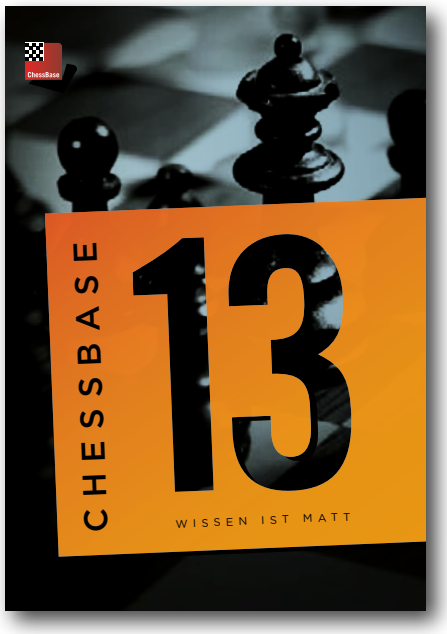

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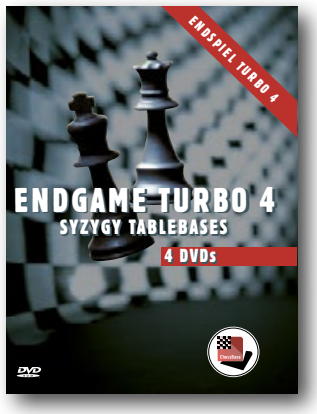

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NOTES BY
Anish Giri

QO 1.5 – D37
Viswanathan Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Sochi 2014 (3)

1.d4

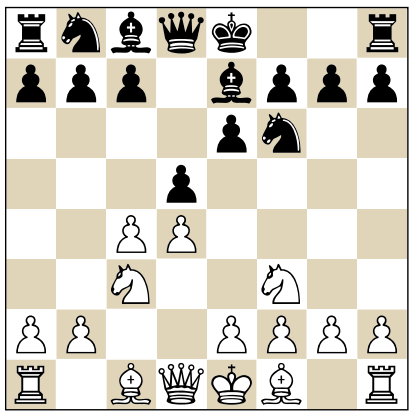
Just as in Game 1, Anand stays true to the queen's pawn move.

1...♘f6 2.c4 e6

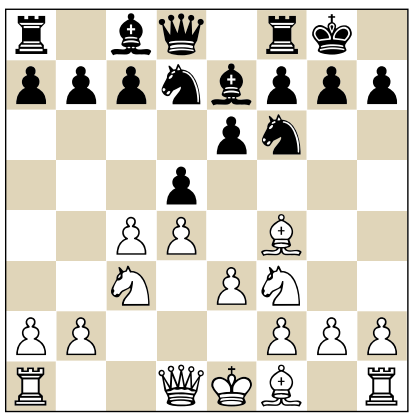
Hardly a surprise; the Grünfeld was likely to be part of the diversion strategy that Magnus had already used in Chennai.

3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7

Generally, the Queen's Gambit Declined, the QGD as professionals call it (usually with a gloomy voice and a frown), is one of those rock-solid openings that has the reputation of being a World Championship opening, a tradition which goes back to the Lasker-Capablanca match. Rock-solid as it is, it was clear that Vishy would try to test Magnus in some sharp forced line.



5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7



NEW IN CHESS

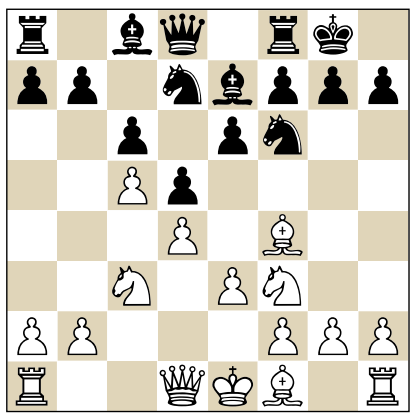
Magnus Carlsen attentively watches Vishy Anand's next move in the opening phase of Game 3. The Indian showed an impressive piece of preparation that dealt a heavy blow to the World Champion's self-confidence.

7.c5

I was hoping for something in the fashion of ♕c2 and 0-0-0, but even though Anand was definitely aiming to fight back, he wasn't that adventurous... Or so it seemed at first.

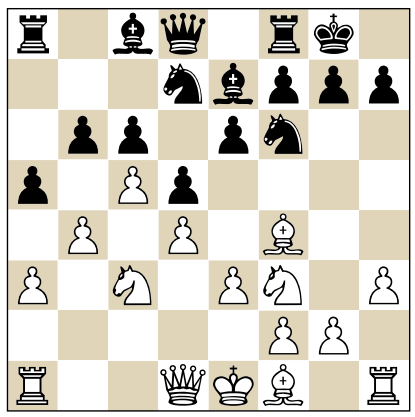
7...c6

Many people probably wonder what Vishy had in mind against the main move here, the Kramnik move if you wish (those terms are interchangeable), 7...♘h5, but probably something similar to the game. Something forced. 7...♘e4!? is an ultra-modern way of playing this position. Not being a big QGD fan, I have nevertheless played this particular position with both colours.



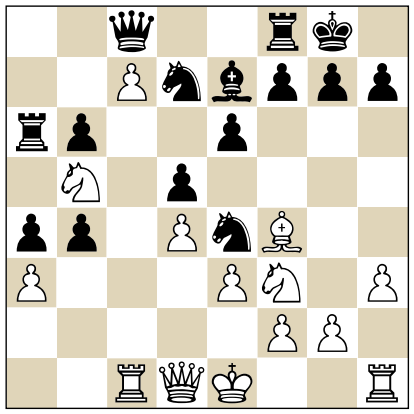
8.♗d3

Since this game was essentially won in the opening, I decided that I might as well embark on a big lecture on the relevant theory of this variation. You might start by looking at the course of the game and then come back to the notes on 8.h3... The main move nowadays is, indeed, the clever 8.h3, generally a useful move, against a future ...♘h5 (which in fact Black could have played a move ago). The idea is that after 8...b6 9.b4 a5 10.a3, if Black goes ...♗a6, White will take on a6 and win a full tempo. It turns out, however, that the extra move h2-h3 has drawbacks as well!



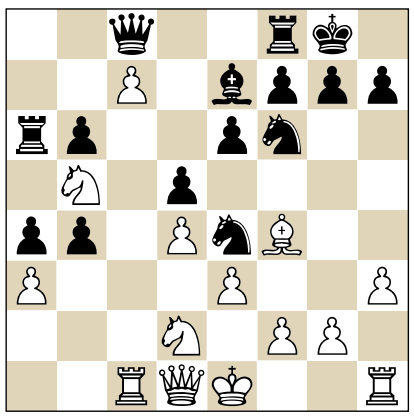
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now, if we continue as in the game after 10...♗a6, with an extra tempo (10...h6 is the fashionable way of meeting this move order. Black also postpones developing his light-squared bishop: 11.♗d3 ♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♖xa6, and the h6-pawn is no doubt an important improvement of Black's position; alternatively, 10...♗b7!? is the way for lazy people: 11.♗d3 ♕c8 12.0-0 ♗a6), 11.♗xa6 ♖xa6 12.b5 cxb5 13.c6 ♕c8 14.c7 b4 15.♘b5 a4! 16.♖c1 ♘e4, we reach this position, which has already occurred in over 20 games.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

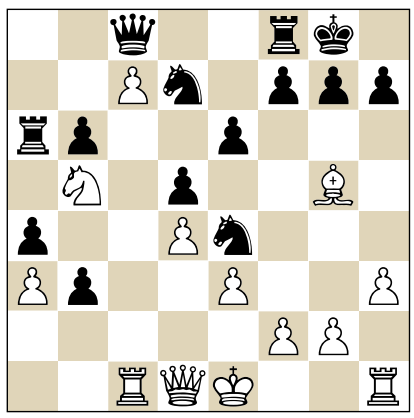
Now, in order to fight for the key d6-square, White goes 17.♘d2! when Black has two ways to defend his position:
17...♘df6 and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 18.f3?! was the move order of the Tomashevsky game that I will refer to shortly, but it allows 18...♘c3! (here 18...♖a5? is bad in view of 19.♘xe4! ♘xe4 20.fxe4) 19.♘xc3 bxc3 20.♖xc3 ♕d7, followed by ...♖c8, and the c7-pawn is a weakness rather than a strength. Note that the presence of a pair of knights is to Black's advantage. The knight on d2 has no future, while the f6-knight will soon have the c7-pawn for breakfast, via e8.

B) 18.♘xe4 ♘xe4 19.f3, and now, after 19...♖a5?! (19...♘c3!) 20.fxe4 ♖xb5 21.♕xa4 ♖a5 22.♕c6 bxa3 23.exd5 ♖xd5 24.♕xb6 ♕d7 25.0-0 ♖c8 26.♖c6, we have a game played six years ago (in 2008 between Tomashevsky and Riazantsev, which eventually ended in a victory for White). Looks familiar, doesn't it?
If we proceed like Anand, the point of his idea is revealed: 17.♘g5?! ♗xg5! 18.♗xg5 b3!

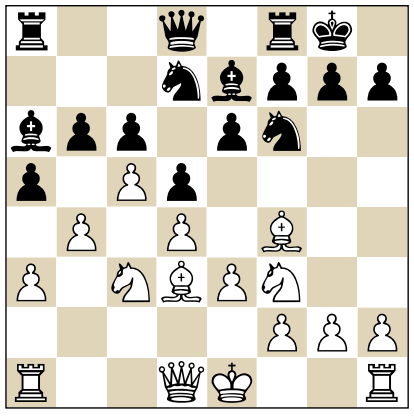


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

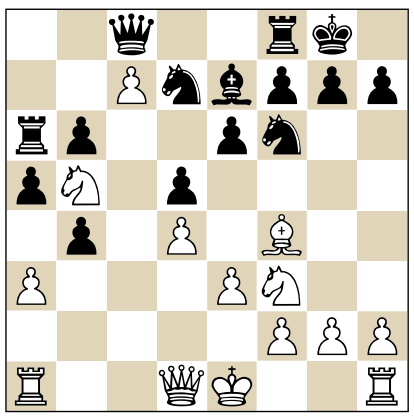
and here it turns out that the pawn stands much better on h2 than on h3. Why is that? Well, White would very much like to play 19.f3 now or later, when after 19...♖a5!, defending the knight suddenly becomes a problem: 20.♕e2 (20.♕d3 b2!) 20...♘g3! and this move is only possible with the white pawn on h3.

'Even though Anand is nearly twice Carlsen's age, he goes for the "modern" move-by-move approach, basically telling Magnus, "Let's compare our computer analysis"'.

8...b6 9.b4 a5 10.a3 ♗a6
10...♗b7? would be an attempt to avoid the complications, but it backfires after 11.0-0 ♕c8 12.♘a4! and Black falls one move short of exchanging the bishops: 12...♗a6 13.cxb6.



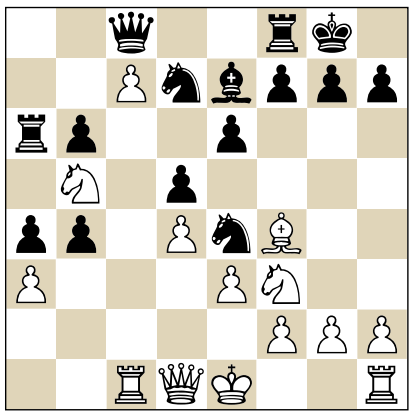
11.♗xa6!
Of course! Vishy doesn't want to start a long murky positional battle, known as Magnus territory. Even though Anand is nearly twice Carlsen's age, he goes for the 'modern' move-by-move approach, basically telling Magnus, 'Let's compare our computer analysis'.
Another approach is 11.0-0, which Anand might have played against another opponent, let's say Topalov, but definitely not against Magnus. One possible way that game might develop is 11...♕c8 12.h3 ♕b7 13.♖b1 axb4 14.axb4 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3 ♖a3 16.♕c2 ♖fa8, and both players continue their manoeuvring. White goes ♖fc1, ♘d2-b3 or ♘e1-d3, while Black will eventually have to decide on ...bxc5 or ...b5 and prepare ...♗d8-c7. In short, a long game.
11...♖xa6 12.b5 The forcing sequence starts. **12...cxb5 13.c6 ♕c8 14.c7 b4 15.♘b5**



15...a4 This was widely considered necessary in order to challenge the b5-knight. Magnus was still playing reasonably fast, and it seemed to me that Vishy looked quite unhappy. I imagine he was probably seriously concerned that his try would run into solid preparation and that his plans of revenge would have to be postponed.
Another option was 15...bxa3 16.0-0 ♘e4, but that looks way too risky.

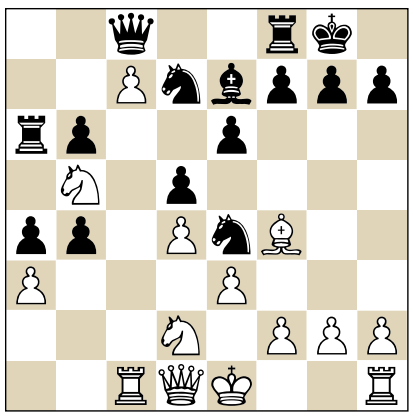
16.♖c1 ♘e4!

The d6-square is what it is all about now. 16...b3 runs into 17.♗d6!.



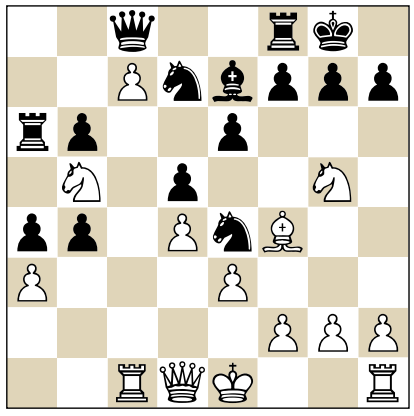
17.♘g5!?

This would have been an excellent novelty... if it had been a novelty. This clever shot had already been played in Adams-Aronian a year ago and really shouldn't have escaped Magnus's attention. Probably, as it often happens, he knew something somewhere, but he hadn't paid close attention to this line. As a consequence he probably reproduced something that was hidden somewhere in the deep recesses of his memory. But that's just one possible version of what actually happened.
17.♘d2 can be met by



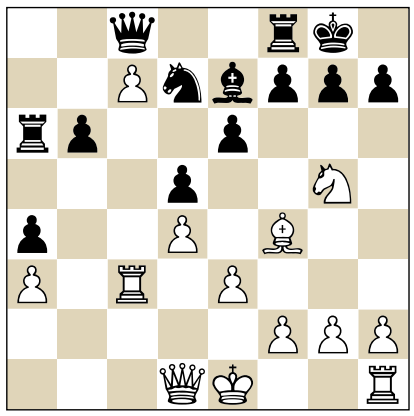
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17...♘c3!? (17...♘df6 transposes after 18.♘xe4) 18.♘xc3 bxc3 19.♖xc3 ♕b7! 20.0-0 b5 21.♕c2 ♖c8, and this position should be fine for Black. He will eventually get to the c7-pawn. It is very important that the pawn is blocked by the rook and not by the queen.



17...♘df6

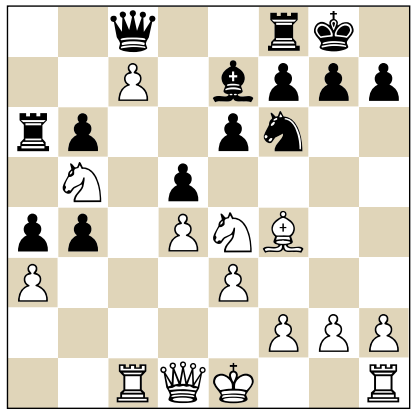
Other moves seem bad. 17...♘xg5? 18.♗d6! leads to a winning position for White: 18...♖a5 19.♗xe7 ♖xb5 20.axb4 ♖e8 21.♕xa4 ♖xe7 22.♕xb5, and with the c7-pawn there, Black is pretty helpless.
Also bad is 17...♗xg5?! 18.♗xg5 b3 (or 18...♖a5 19.axb4 ♖xb5 20.♕xa4 ♖xb4 21.♕xb4 ♘xg5 22.0-0, and the c7-pawn is once again a big nuisance) 19.f3 ♖a5, and here 8.h3 comes to mind: 20.♕e2! and as there is no ...♘g3! here, White is basically winning.
The best alternative was 17...♘c3, but with the knight on g5 there is a difference: 18.♘xc3 bxc3 19.♖xc3, and now the point of 17.♘g5 is revealed.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Black can't regroup with 19...♕b7? since this fails to 20.♕c2!, while after 19...h6 20.♘f3 ♕b7 White may follow up with 21.♘e5, exchanging the knights and making clear who is the boss.

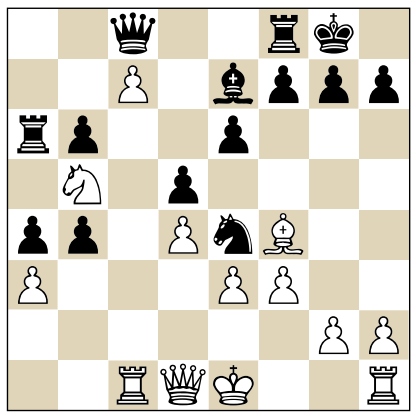
18.♘xe4



18...♘xe4

Magnus played this almost instantly, when there was actually a very serious alternative available.
Possibly the best move was 18...dxe4!?. Now the complications start: 19.♘d6 (19.♗d6 ♘d5! miraculously holds the c7-pawn. After 20.♗xe7 ♘xe7 21.♘d6 ♕d7 it is important that the knight got to e7, from where it covers the c8-square) 19...♗xd6 20.♗xd6 b3!. Creating an asset of his own. White wins an exchange, but after that Black will be ready to capture the c7-pawn eventually after playing ...♖a7 and ...♘d5: 21.♗xf8 ♔xf8 22.♕d2 ♘d5 (threatening ...♖a7, followed by ...♖xc7). In order to create some play of his own White has to play f3 either immediately or after 0-0. In any case, the machine claims the position is balanced and comes up with some genius perpetual checks. As usual.

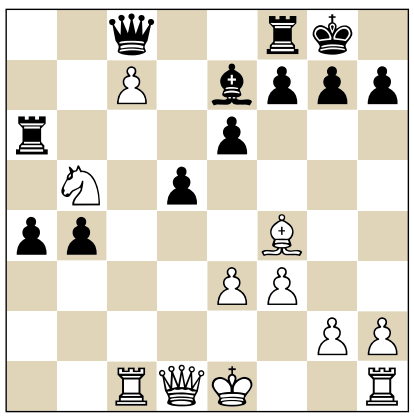
19.f3



The players and their entourage, the organizers and most of the journalists stayed in the 5-star Radisson Blu Paradise Resort and Spa on the shores of the Black Sea.

19...♖a5? This was the move played in the afore-mentioned game by Adams. It was also played in some games in the 8.h3 line. It looks quite natural, but it is possibly the first and decisive mistake made by Magnus in this game. What to say, fortune smiled on Vishy this day!

19...♘c5 is spectacular but not good enough: 20.dxc5 bxc5 21.axb4 cxb4

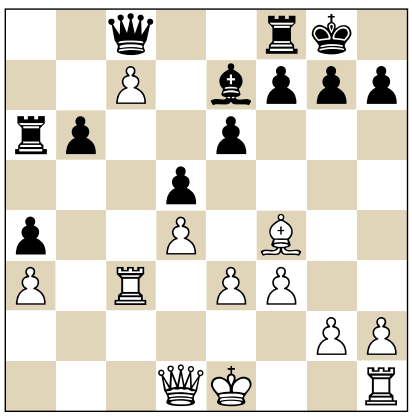


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

22.e4!! (not 22.0-0, giving time for regrouping: 22...♕b7 23.e4 ♖c8, when Black gets serious counterplay) 22...b3 (22...♕b7 is losing now: 23.e5! ♖c8 24.♘d6) 23.0-0 b2 24.♖c3 a3 25.♕c2, and all the pawns on the queenside are stopped, but White is a piece up. The evaluation here is largely in White's favour.

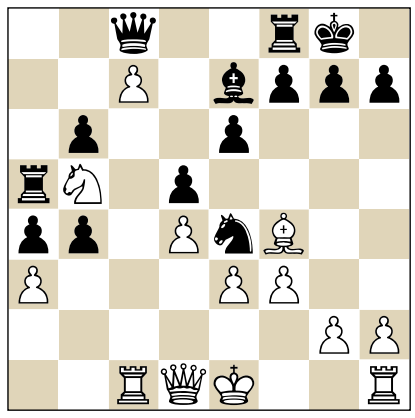
19...♕d7 was another option, which is not natural and not good: 20.fxe4 ♖c8 (the point) 21.exd5 exd5 22.0-0 ♕xb5, and now White can add some pressure on the kingside: 23.♕g4! ♕e8 24.♖c6!. Introducing some attacking ideas: 24...b3 25.♗e5 ♗f8 26.♖cf6!

The best way was 19...♘c3!. True, White is obviously better after the simple 20.♘xc3 bxc3 21.♖xc3, but here I believe Black should be holding. He will get the queen out and block the pawn with the rook. And he may manage to get in ...b5-b4 at some point. I thought this would be a Magnus-like defence, but I can imagine that if you are caught unawares, then 19... ♖a5 might seem tempting.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Play might continue 21...b5 22.0-0 (22.♔f2!?) 22...♕d7! (22...b4 may be premature: 23.axb4 ♗xb4 24.♖c2 ♕b7 25.♖b2 a3 26.♖b3 ♖b6 27.♕a1!, causing Black some problems, as the f1-rook will join the fight for the b-file) 23.♕c2 ♖c8 24.♖b1 ♖b6, with a fire-proof position. Sure, it's not much fun here for Black, who has to sit and wait and on each move consider whether ...♗d6 or ...b4 might finally save him from his suffering.



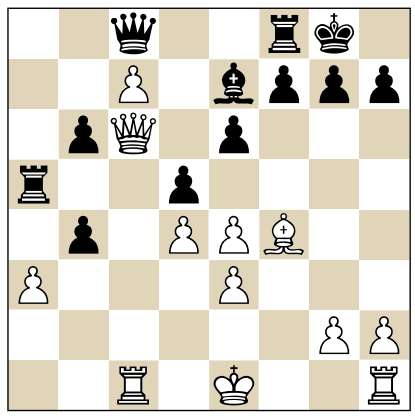
20.fxe4!

The exclamation mark and the Novelty symbol are a mere formality in the computer era. Houdini doesn't even need time to warm up to point out that this move gives White an advantage.

Clearly bad was 20.♕e2? ♕d7! 21.fxe4 ♖c8!.

20...♖xb5 21.♕xa4 ♖a5 22.♕c6

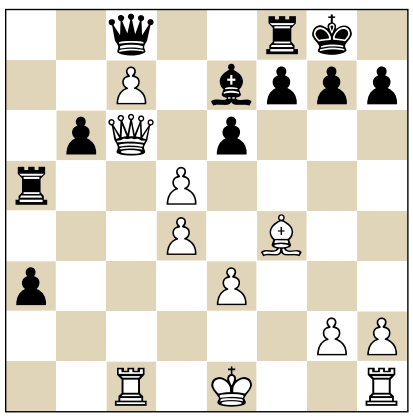
If we follow the famous Anand method, which is to leave the engine with this position, have breakfast and come back to see its conclusion, we will find that White has a huge advantage already. The c7-passer can't be matched by Black's queenside counterplay. It simply can't be challenged!



22...bxa3 22...dxe4 is met by 23.a4! and the c7-pawn will be there forever, once again.

23.exd5!

At the press conference Vishy pointed out that this is an important move. He probably remembered it has an exclamation mark in his file. So let's give it one here, too.

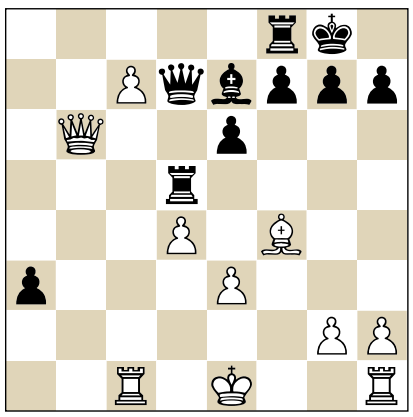


23...♖xd5

23...exd5 is far more logical, but probably not much better: 24.0-0. Black can't really make use of his dangerous-looking a-pawn: 24...a2?! 25.♖a1!. The c7-pawn is far more dangerous, as it is supported by the bishop. The a2-pawn is of little use and condemned to be lost.

23...♗b4+ should be met by the careful 24.♔f2!, and not 24.♔e2?, allowing some nasty counterplay: 24...exd5 25.♕xb6 ♕g4+! 26.♔f2 ♗d2! 27.♖c2 g5!.

24.♕xb6 ♕d7



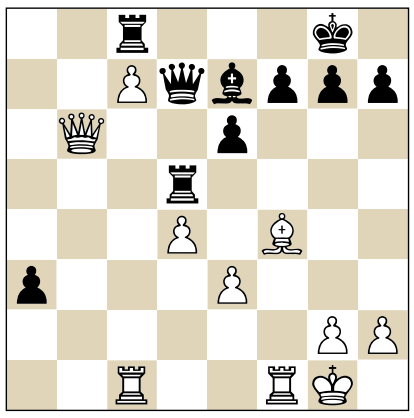
25.0-0

I wouldn't call this natural move an inaccuracy, especially considering how well Anand conducted the remaining phase of the game.

Yet the machine claims that 25.♕a6! is even more powerful, and I see no reason to disagree: 25...♕c8 (the reason why Vishy didn't go for 25.♕a6. 25...♖c8 loses by force: 26.♖b1! ♖xc7 27.♖b8+ ♗d8 28.♗xc7 ♕xc7 29.♖c8! and White will eventually pick up the a3-pawn, with a winning position. Note that another advantage of 8.♗d3 over 8.h3 can be seen here. There is no ...♕g3+) 26.♕c4 ♖a5 27.0-0, and White is winning, slowly but surely. Once again, the a3-pawn is not as strong as the one on c7.

> 'At the press conference Vishy pointed out that this is an important move. He probably remembered it has an exclamation mark in his file. So let's give it one here, too.'

25...♖c8



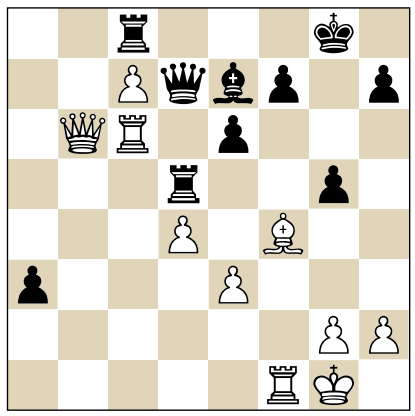
26.♖c6!

This move, killing all counterplay, is the winner. I guess it was here that Magnus started feeling doomed.

26.♕a6, threatening ♖b1-b8, was the move that suggested itself, but there seems to be no win after the strong 26...♖b5! 27.♖b1 ♖b2! 28.♖xb2 axb2 29.♕b7 ♗a3! and the game continues.

26...g5

Some kind of desperation, but Black is completely lost. He could sit and wait, but then White would eventually prepare the invasion of the f1-rook. There is no need to hurry, so first possibly h3, ♔h1... After 26...♗b4 Anand's ♖a1 is good, but an even more powerful option is 27.♕b7!? g5 28.♖b6! followed by ♕xc8, with a win.

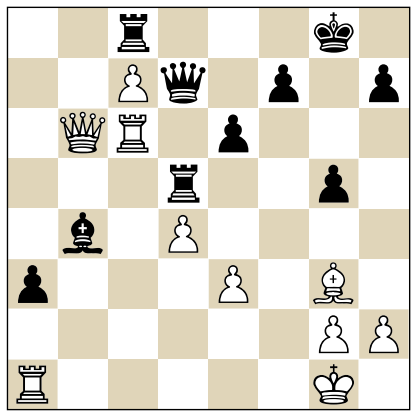


27.♗g3 Simple and strong. 27.♗e5 was an alternative, but there is no need to complicate matters: 27...♗b4!? 28.♕xb4 ♕xc6 29.♕e7 ♖xe5 30.♕xf7+ ♔h8 31.♕f6+ ♔g8 32.♕xe5 h6! and Black is fighting.

27...♗b4!? A clever resource. Now suddenly ...♗a5 is in the air.

28.♖a1!

A very strong prophylactical move that Vishy was quite proud of, and rightly so! 28.♕b7 is met by 28...♗d2!.



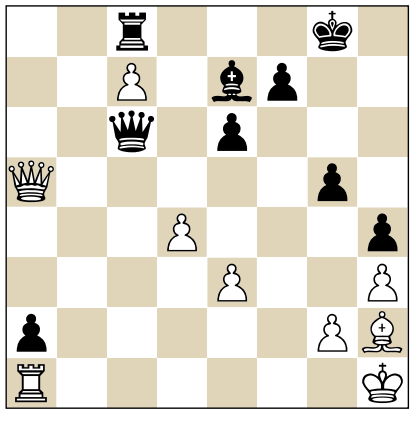
28...♗a5?

This move loses outright, but Magnus probably felt that sitting and waiting wouldn't help. Not to mention that by this point he was already under very serious time-pressure.

To illustrate how White eventually wins this position I will give two sample lines: 28...h6 29.h3 ♗e7 30.♖b1. This is the idea. The threat now is

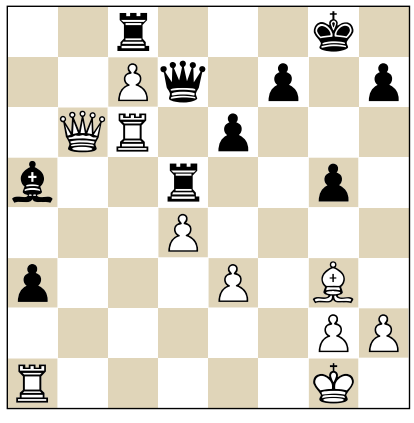
♕a6. 30...a2 31.♖a1 ♖a5 32.♕xa5 ♕xc6 33.♖xa2 ♗d6 34.♗xd6 ♕xd6 35.♖c2, and White has an extra pawn all the way on c7, with a completely winning position.

The interesting attempt 28...h5 won't work either: 29.h3 h4 30.♗h2 ♗f8 31.♔h1! (just in case...) 31...♗e7 32.♖b1 a2 33.♖a1 ♖a5 34.♕xa5 ♕xc6. Here, unlike in the line with 28...h6, White can't take on a2 with the rook because of a back rank issue. However, ...h5-h4 also has its downsides:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

35.♕xa2! ♗d6 36.♕a5! and White wins, as the g5-pawn will fall.



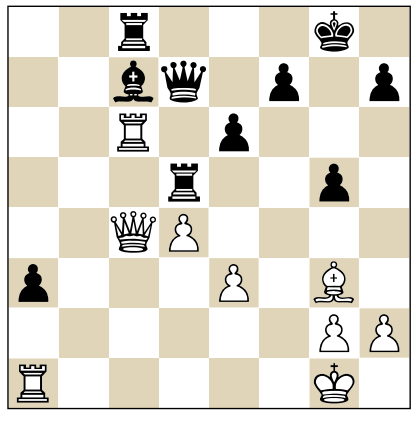
29.♕a6! The classy way to win. Also winning was 29.♕b7 e5 30.♗xe5 ♖xe5 31.dxe5 ♖xc7 32.♖xc7 ♗xc7 33.♕a7, and White is a healthy exchange up.

29...♗xc7 29...♗b4 loses to 30.♖b6 or even 30.♕xc8+!? first.

30.♕c4!

And the bishop is lost. Having followed the game without an engine, I managed to fall into Black's only trap:

30.♕b7?? is a miraculous way to spoil everything you have done: 30...♖xd4!.



30...e5 White picks up an exchange, but the c7-bishop is still doomed. **31.♗xe5 ♖xe5 32.dxe5 ♕e7 33.e6 ♔f8 34.♖c1** Black resigned. A great come-back by the Tiger!

Those who say that this victory was largely based on preparation and not on actual over-the-board play have a point, but if Magnus is allowed to use his strengths, why wouldn't Anand?

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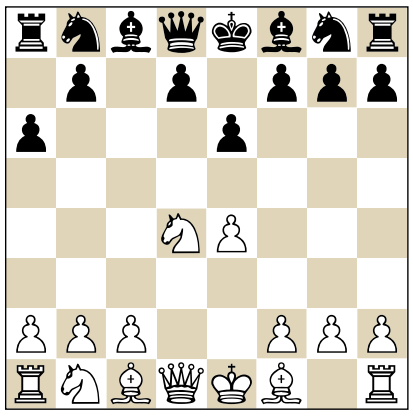
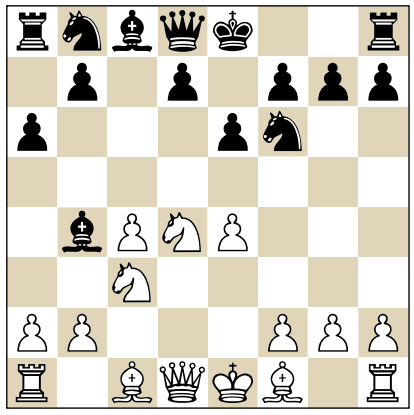
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

SI 41.15 – B41
Magnus Carlsen
Viswanathan Anand
Sochi 2014 (6)

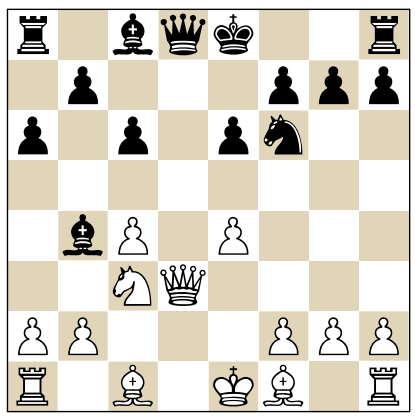
1.e4
Since Anand switched his opening last time, it was logical that Magnus would keep on playing 1.e4.
1...c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4
Going for the Open Sicilian this time.
3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6!?
This was a huge surprise to me. The Kan Variation has a somewhat dubious reputation and is known to be an excellent choice when facing weaker players in a must-win situation in an Open. I can't think of a top player who regularly plays this opening in elite tournaments. And even though one of Anand's seconds, Gajewski, has huge experience with this opening as Black, I am sure Magnus was surprised here.



5.c4!?
This sideline has been getting more and more popular lately. It seems that White can afford to aim for the ambitious Maroczy Bind (in this case against a Hedgehog) after all.
5...♘f6 6.♘c3 ♗b4
The principled way, otherwise a typical Hedgehog position is likely to arise. That means ...d6, ...b6, ...♗e7 ...♗b7 and ...♘bd7, followed by dozens of moves back and forth by both sides.



7.♕d3! The modern way. The natural 7.♗d3 is not a good way to fight for the advantage, according to recent theory: 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.♘xc6 dxc6 9.e5 ♕a5 10.exf6 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕xc3+ is some old theory, or at least that's what I learnt in childhood. It's a mess, but Black should be doing alright: 12.♗d2 ♕xd3 13.fxg7 ♖g8.
7...♘c6?!
This is known to lead to a worse endgame. I might have said something else, if Anand had not mixed up something later on, but quite possibly he was kind of bluffing at this point. But then again, I can only guess. Curiously enough, both Kramnik and Kasparov claimed to have analysed this position 'back in the days'. And both came to the conclusion that it is no good for Black.
8.♘xc6 dxc6

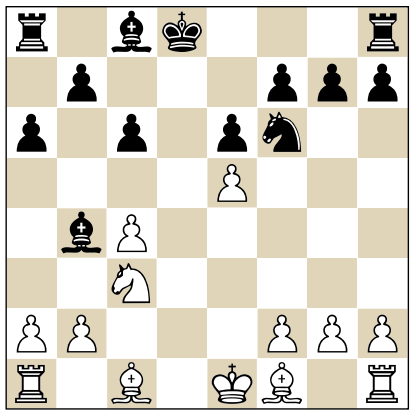


9.♕xd8+!
9.e5 is a less precise move order: 9...♕xd3 (9...♘d7 10.♕g3 ♕a5 11.♗f4 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 (12.♕xc3!?) 12...♘f8!? occurred in Kobalia-Gajewski(!), 2012) 10.♗xd3 ♘d7 11.f4 (11.♗f4 gives Black counterplay here, now that the king is no longer on d8: 11...♗a5! 12.0-0-0 ♗c7 13.♖he1 f6!) 11...f6! 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♗d2 0-0 14.0-0-0 e5!. All this happened in a game between two women, Schut-Danielian, played in the C-Group of the 2012 Tata Steel tournament. Black equalizes here.

NEW IN CHESS

Magnus Carlsen unwinds on one of the free days playing basketball.

9...♔xd8 10.e5



10...♘d7

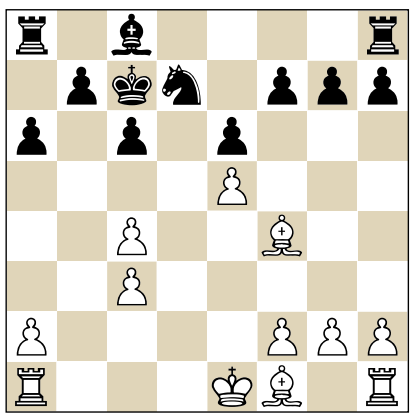
A new move, but once again, it is just very likely that Anand had mixed up something, since it would be an incredibly poor decision to go for such an unpleasant endgame, especially against Magnus Carlsen, who is known to enjoy such positions like no other.

10...♘e4 11.a3! ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♔c7 13.♗e3 b6 14.♗d3 (14.f3 ♘c5 15.0-0-0 ♖d8) 14...♘c5 15.♗xc5 bxc5 16.0-0-0 ♗b7 17.♖he1! ♖ad8 18.♖e3 was seen in a game Flores-Lemos in 2008. White won.

11.♗f4 ♗xc3+

Anand's coming moves are all pretty logical, but they lead to a pretty bad position, so alternatives were worth considering. For example 11...f5!?, improving the pawn structure on the kingside, although one thing is certain: Black is a long way from equalizing. He still needs to finish his development, and meanwhile White will find a way to harass the kingside pawns.

12.bxc3 ♔c7



13.h4!?

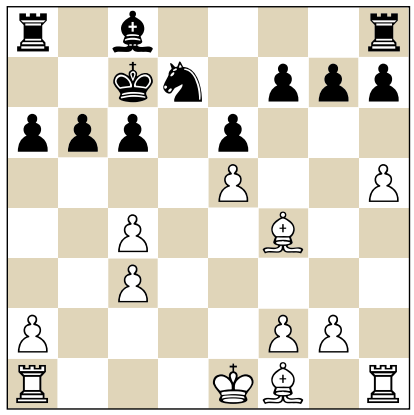
A standard idea. White is heading for the weak kingside pawns.

13.0-0-0 was another plan, and it seems quite interesting too: 13...b6 14.♗e2 ♗b7 15.♖d6, doubling on the d-file (obviously without exchanging all the rooks). Eventually White will push his kingside up the board. He is enjoying a very pleasant edge here.

13...b6

13...h5 potentially weakens the dark squares: 14.♖h3 b6 15.♖g3 g6 16.0-0-0, and the bishop on g5 will be a beast, securing White's control of the d-file.

14.h5



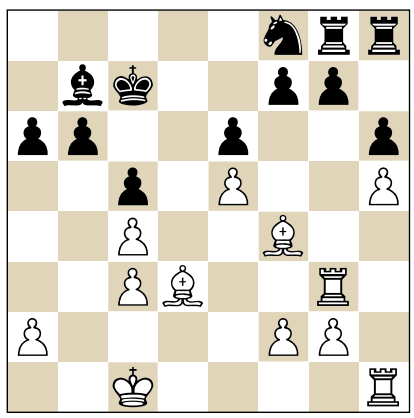
14...h6

A questionable decision, but the position is quite unpleasant anyway.

14...♗b7!? gives White a choice between going to h6 or not yet.

15.0-0-0 ♗b7 16.♖d3 c5 17.♖g3 ♖ag8 This is a must, keeping the h7-square under control.

18.♗d3 ♘f8 Black has a very tight position and is ready to create some play on the kingside with ... g5 or ...g6. Magnus, however, finds a precise way to keep Black tied up.

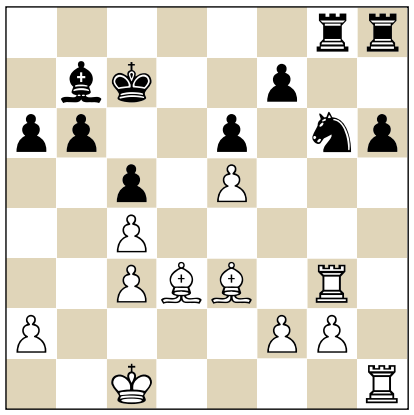


19.♗e3! g6

19...♘d7 doesn't really threaten the pawn, because of 20.♖h4! ♘xe5 21.♗f4 f6 22.♖hg4.

19...♗c6 20.♖h4 ♗e8 is possible, but too passive. White will slowly but surely find his way. Eventually Black will be unable to do without ...g5.

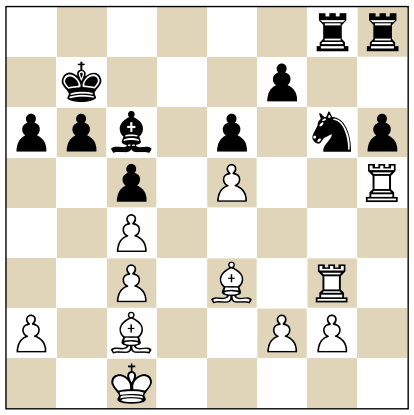
20.hxg6 ♘xg6



21.♖h5! A very important move, protecting e5 and not allowing any complications. Instead, 21.♖xh6? ♘xe5! 22.♗f4 ♖xg3! 23.♗xe5+ ♔d7 24.♖xh8 ♖xd3 is fine for Black.

21...♗c6 21...♘e7 is natural, but it is strongly met by 22.♖xg8 ♖xg8 23.g3! and the h6-pawn will fall. I tried to come up with some counterplay here, but there is nothing at hand: 23...♖d8 24.♗e2 ♗e4 25.♖xh6 ♘c6. Maybe this was worth a shot, but a pawn is a pawn and Black is lacking one.

22.♗c2 ♔b7



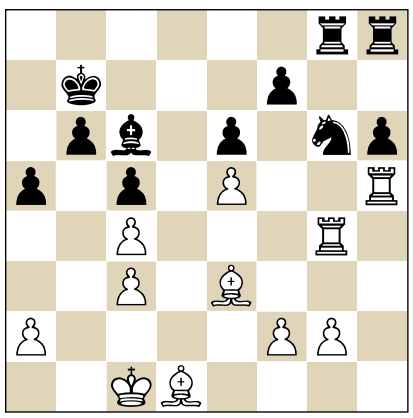
23.♖g4?! To be honest, I liked this move during the game, but after delving into the position quite deeply I realized that this is not where the rook belongs. Basically, the point of the position is that White shouldn't rush with grabbing the h6-pawn. It is not easy to improve, but the key is getting

the king across the d-file to guard the g2- and f3-pawns and then eventually grab the h6-pawn.

23.♔d2! was the way to do it. If Black sits and waits, the following will happen: 23...♔c7 (23...♘f8 24.♖xg8 ♖xg8 25.g3, and once again the h6-pawn falls) 24.♔e2 ♔b7 25.f3 ♔a7 26.♔f2 ♔b7 27.♖gh3 ♖d8 28.g4, and now White will already go ♗xh6 and be a healthy pawn up. The best way for Black is probably to try some kind of b5-break, but of course his chances of survival against Carlsen supported by two bishops are not very high.

23...a5 23...♘f8 can now be met by 24.♖f4!? (24.♖xg8 ♖xg8 25.g3 is also still good, of course).

24.♗d1 It was probably best to just go back with 24.♖g3! and swing the king across after all...



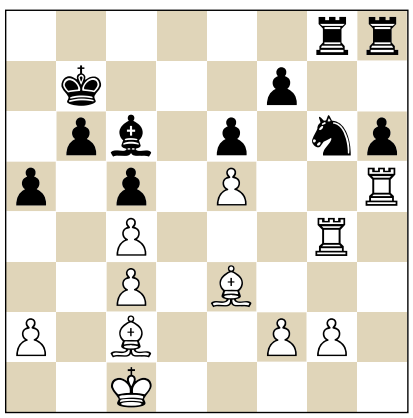
24...♖d8!

Possibly Magnus had forgotten about this idea. Now the king shall not pass.

25.♗c2! Magnus realized in time that his idea had failed; a well-known and excellent skill of his.

After 25.♗e2 ♔a6 the bishop has nothing to do on e2 and Black may go for ...♘e7-f5, for example.

25...♖dg8



26.♔d2??

One of those rare Magnus blunders. This was truly shocking. But what was even more shocking was that before everyone had realized what had happened, Anand had returned the favour. What I thought was the correct move, 26.♔d1?!, is actually not so good (as ...♗f3+ is making its appearance in the variations): 26...♘e7 (26...♘f8!?) 27.♖xg8 (27.♖f4 ♖xg2 28.♖xf7 ♔c8! is unclear, too, as ...♗f3+ is an important resource that keeps White from taking the knight) 27...♖xg8. Now that there is no more

'I am not an expert of chess history, but I think one must dig deep to find such a case of mutual(!) blindness in a World Championship match.'

28.g3! after 28.♖xh6 ♖xg2, Black has enough counterplay, for example: 29.♖h7 ♘g6 30.♖xf7+ ♔c8 31.f4 ♘h4 32.♖f6 ♔d7.

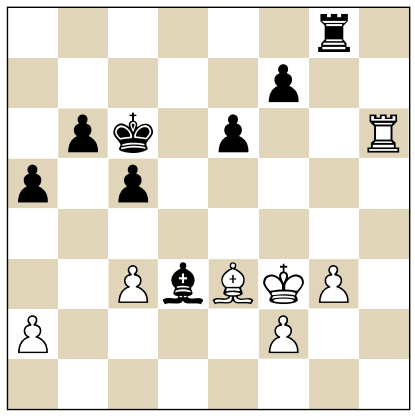
26.f3?! is premature: 26...♘e7! 27.♖xg8 ♖xg8. There is no g4 here: 28.♖h2 ♘g6.

26.♖g3! was the way once again. And now back to the ♔d2 plan: 26...a4 27.a3!?

26...a4??

I am not an expert of chess history, but I think one must dig deep to find such a case of mutual(!) blindness in a World Championship match.

26...♘xe5! wins two pawns. The game kind of continues, but the position is close to technically lost for White: 27.♖xg8 ♘xc4+ 28.♔d3 ♘b2+! 29.♔e2 ♖xg8 30.g3 ♗b5+ 31.♔f3 ♘d3!? 32.♗xd3 ♗xd3 33.♖xh6 ♔c6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

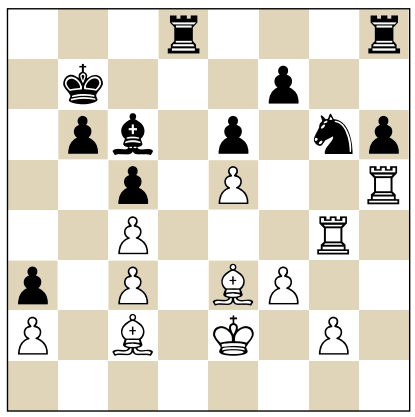
I am sure Magnus would have fought on, but the position might already be beyond the point where anyone can save it. Black is not just a pawn up; his pawn structure is a decisive factor here. White's queenside is weak and he loses his kingside superiority once the e5-pawn falls.

27.♔e2 Of course, you don't get another such chance: 27.a3?? ♘xe5!

27...a3 Forgetting the blunder, Anand has advanced his pawn to a3 in order to potentially create some counterplay against the a2-pawn; a decent enough idea, but the blunder just overshadows everything.

28.f3 It must have been hard for both players to continue playing as if nothing had happened, but the game had to go on.

28...♖d8 Sacrificing the kingside pawns and going for counterplay. A good attempt. Black can't just wait with 28...♔c7, as White will eventually attack the a3-pawn: 29.♗c1 ♔b7 30.♗b1! and ♗xa3 is already a threat.



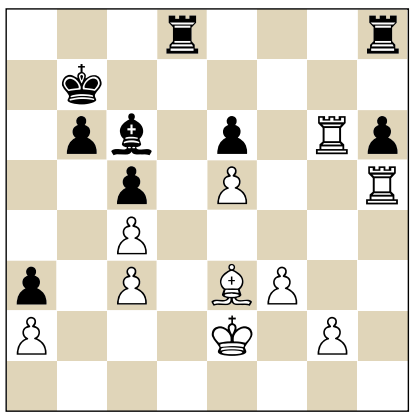
29.♔e1?!

NEW IN CHESS

Arkady Dvorkovich, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and Head of the Organizing Committee, as a spectator during the Tal Memorial blitz.

The black bishop will appear on a4 at some stage, and then the rook will threaten to go to a1 via d1, so this is not where the king has to be. But then again, it is not the king move we should be talking about...

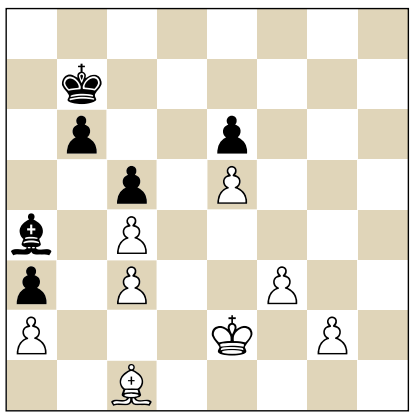
Critical, of course, was 29.♗xg6!? fxg6 30.♖xg6, and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 30...♗a4 31.♖xe6 ♗c2, and Black generates some serious counterplay, which could easily scare off the White player, but it seems that in the end he will be able to get rid of the annoying a3-pawn and emerge with good winning chances: 32.♖h1 ♗d3+ 33.♔f2 ♗xc4 34.♖f6 ♖df8 35.♖hxh6 ♖xh6 36.♖xf8 ♖h5 37.♖f4 ♗xa2 38.♖a4 ♖xe5 39.♖xa3 ♗d5 40.g4, and something like this looks very close to winning.

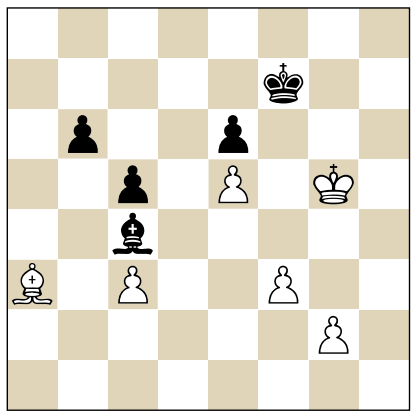
B) 30...♗e8, exchanging all rooks 'by force', doesn't seem to work: 31.♖g7+ ♖d7 (31...♔a6!) 32.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 33.♖xh6 – not the only move, but it seems that White can trade the rooks here – 33...♖xh6 34.♗xh6 ♗a4 35.♗c1.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now Black is too late to grab the a2-pawn. And if he doesn't, he will probably be lost: 35...♗c2 36.♗xa3 ♗b1 37.♔e3 ♔c6!? 38.♔f4 ♔d7 39.♔g5 ♔e7 40.♗xc5+! bxc5 41.a4 ♗d3 42.a5 ♗xc4 43.♔g6, and Black is hopeless.

If Magnus didn't want to grab the pawn, he could also have tried 29.♗c1!? but then 29...♔c7!? looks strong, with the idea that after 30.♗xg6 fxg6 31.♖xg6 ♗e8 32.♖g7+ ♖d7 33.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 34.♖xh6 ♖xh6 35.♗xh6 ♗g6 36.♗c1 ♗b1 37.♗xa3 ♗xa2 38.♔e3 ♔e7 39.♔f4 ♔f7 40.♔g5 ♗xc4

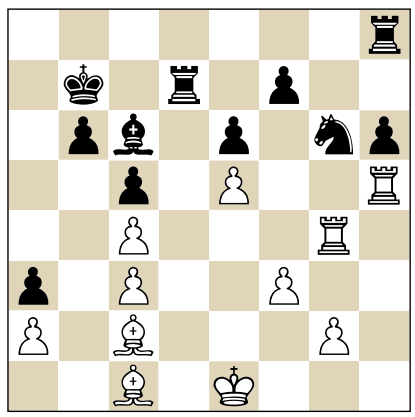


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

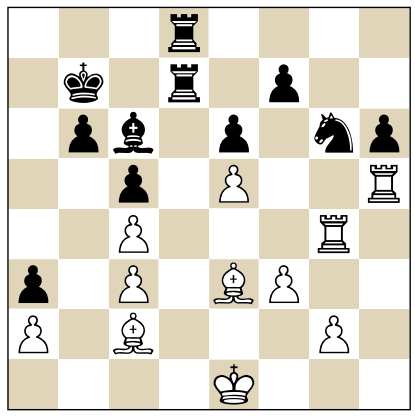
Black has a fortress, as he would have been in time to bring the king across and snatch the queenside pawns as well.

White, of course, could have deviated, for example on move 34 he didn't have to go for the bishop ending, but could and should have kept the rook.

29...♖d7 30.♗c1



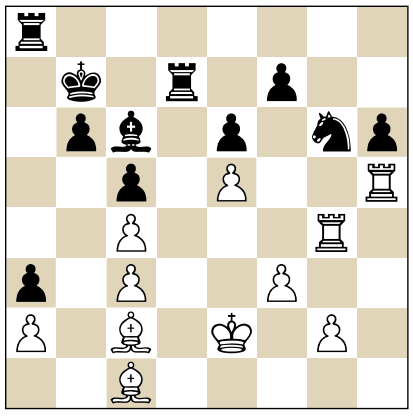
30...♖a8 Logical, but Anand's idea just doesn't work. It falls one tempo short. Better was 30...♖hd8!, intending to sacrifice an exchange: 31.♗e3 (31.♔e2 allows the strong 31...b5! 32.cxb5 ♗xb5+ 33.c4 ♗a6, with serious counterplay; 31.♗xh6 is always met by 31...♖h8! 32.♗xg6 fxg6 33.♖xg6 ♗a4! and it transpires that the king stands poorly on e1)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

31...♖d3!. A brilliant positional exchange sacrifice. In fact, later in the game Anand had another chance, but this is a better version. 32.♗xd3 ♖xd3 33.♔e2 ♖d7! (on c3 the rook is trapped after ♔d2) 34.♗xh6 ♗a4 35.♗c1 (White can eliminate the a3-pawn, but the bishop is out of play there) 35...♖d1 36.♗xa3 ♖a1 37.♔e3 ♔c6! and White is extremely uncoordinated. In fact, Black is just fine.

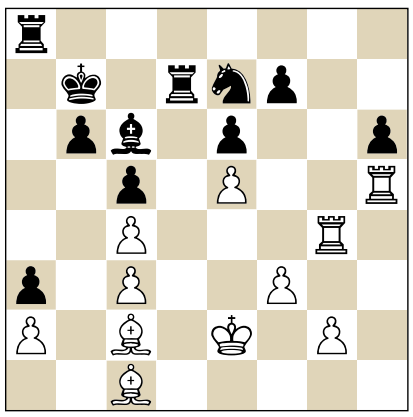
31.♔e2



31...♗a4 This was considered to be the final mistake, but in fact it came one move later.

31...♖ad8!? had to be tried, just waiting: 32.♗xh6 ♖h8! 33.♗xg6 fxg6 34.♖xg6 ♗a4 35.♖xe6 ♗c2, with counterplay, but it seems that White has good winning chances here if we go down the road: 36.♖h1 ♗d3+ 37.♔f2 ♗xc4 38.♖f6 ♖d3 39.♖b1 b5 40.♗e3 ♖h5 41.♗xc5 ♖xe5 42.♗b4 ♖d2+ 43.♔g3 ♖g5+ 44.♔f4 ♖gxg2 45.♗xa3 ♖xa2 46.♗b4. This line is not exactly forced, but one way or another, White is pushing here.

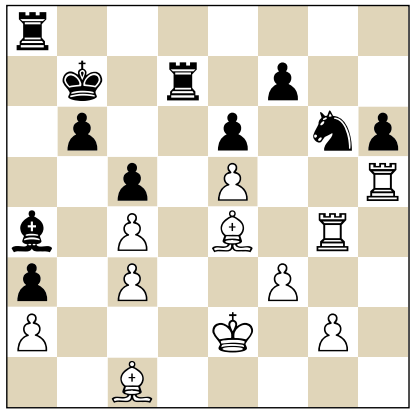
31...♘e7 was suggested by the players, but it doesn't help all that much:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

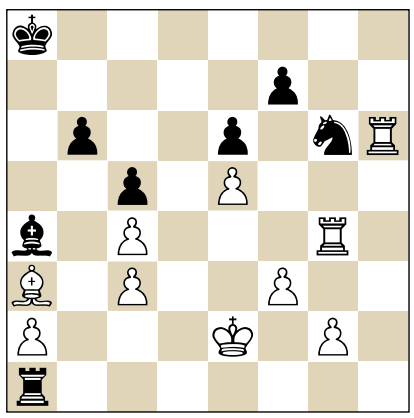
32.♖g7! (this may be the most accurate, avoiding any counterplay. Black is still fighting after 32.♖xh6 ♗a4 33.♗e4+ ♘c6 34.♖g7 ♔c7 35.♖f6 ♖f8) 32...♖f8 33.♗xh6, and frankly there is not much counterplay here now that the rook has had to leave the a-file.

32.♗e4+



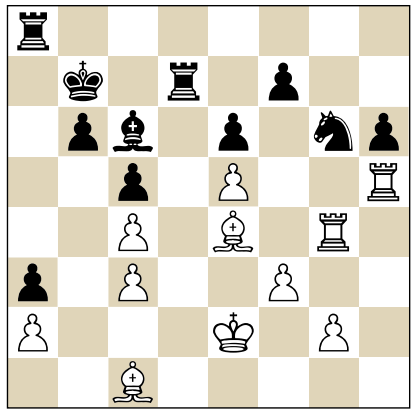
32...♗c6?

Played instantly by Anand. This doesn't work, but he had a surprising alternative (not surprising for the reader, though, who already saw a similar motif earlier on!), using the fact that the bishop on a3 is out of play: 32...♔a7! 33.♗xa8 ♔xa8 34.♗xa3 (34.♖h1 ♗c2!) 34...♖d1 35.♖xh6 ♖a1.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

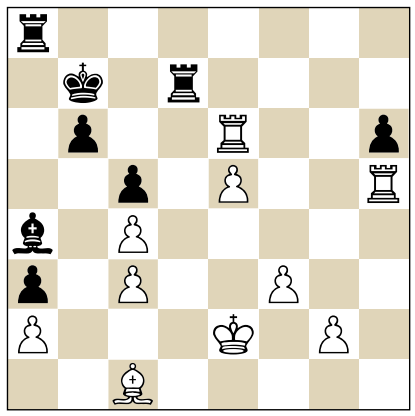
Black is an exchange and two pawns down, but miraculously the game still continues! The a2-pawn is falling, the e5- and c4-pawns are about to, as well: 36.♔e3 (36.♖g5!? giving up the bishop with the idea of ♖h7, is a good winning attempt as well) 36...♘xe5 (36...♖xa2 37.♗c1!) 37.♖g7 ♘xc4+ 38.♔f4 ♘d6 39.♔e5 ♖d1, and Black is holding on. The a3-bishop is still out of the game. Of course, there is still such a thing as material, common sense and so on, so White of course has excellent winning chances here, too.



33.♗xg6!

Just grabbing all the pawns. Black has no time to create any counterplay. The ...♖a8, ...♗a4 plan turned out to be counterproductive. Black has actually lost a full tempo with this manoeuvre. We have to understand, though, what must have been going on in Anand's mind.

33...fxg6 34.♖xg6 ♗a4 35.♖xe6



35...♖d1

It all just comes one move too late. Or 35...♗b3 36.axb3 a2 37.♗b2, and White is winning.

36.♗xa3 ♖a1 37.♔e3 c2

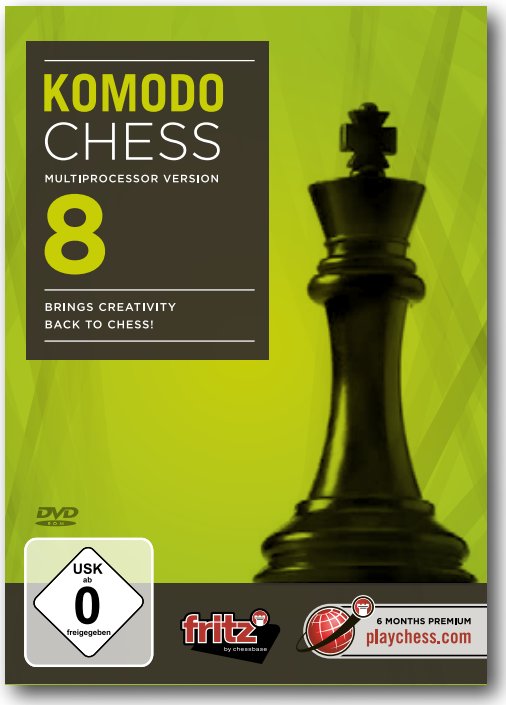
In case of 37...♖xa2 38.♗c1 the bishop has rescued itself.

38.♖e7+

And seeing that his counterplay attempts had failed completely, Anand had to resign this game.

A truly shocking one.

Komodo Chess 8 – the new No. 1!



Komodo is a chess program that is different from the rest. Its search makes greater use of extensions than any other top engine, which results in a slightly lower average depth, helps the actual playing strength significantly. It also allows Komodo to often see deeper than any other engine, even if it is displaying a lower search depth. The evaluation differs from its main rivals because unlike the automated tuning generally employed the Komodo evaluation represents a blend of both automated tuning and the judgment of a grandmaster and computer expert (Larry Kaufman). The programming team have avoided terms and weights that don't make sense to him, even if they happen to test a bit positively. Automated evaluations are subject to rather large sample error, and applying some chess judgment appears to be beneficial, both in results and in the reasonableness of reported evaluations.

Komodo is primarily known for superb positional play. Of course it also one of the top few engines in tactical strength, but the programmers have not been willing to sacrifice positional play just to score better on tactical problem sets. It is generally recognized that all good engines are far stronger tactically than any human player, but that when positional judgment is involved, top grandmasters are still superior in many positions to any engine. Therefore I think it makes sense to emphasize positional play rather than tactical skill; it is better to improve one's weakest point rather than just to further improve the strongest feature.

Komodo is especially useful for opening analysis, because as an opening specialist Larry Kaufman has always paid close attention to checking whether the program's evaluations in the opening agree in general with accepted theory. Another point in which Komodo excels is the play and evaluation of positions with material imbalance, which it handles more correctly than other top engines. The endgame of Komodo has been improved by the use of Syzygy tablebases, which are considered the best for actual play and game analysis as they provide only the most essential information to save time and memory.

Another unique feature in Komodo is its superior handling of multiple processors. This is most noticeable when using eight or more cores. There is little doubt that Komodo 8 is and will remain the top rated commercial chess engine on most rating lists.

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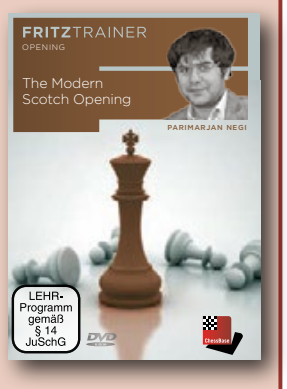
Parimarjan Negi: The Modern Scotch Opening



The Scotch has long been associated with exciting play, although people often doubt it's positional base. But the opening has evolved from the swashbuckling games of the 19th century to become a sound, but aggressive, alternative to the evergreen Spanish. In his first Fritz-Trainer DVD, Parimarjan Negi looks at the latest revolution in Scotch theory that has completely changed white's plans, and once again brought back the interest of the world's elite. Negi presents not only the white strategies in detail but also outlines a dynamic way for Black to counter this latest trend.

Parimarjan Negi (21) became the youngest GM in the world in 2006, and since then has won many international events, including the Asian Championship in 2012. At the chess olympiad in Tromso he won bronze with India, with a 2730 Elo performance on board one.

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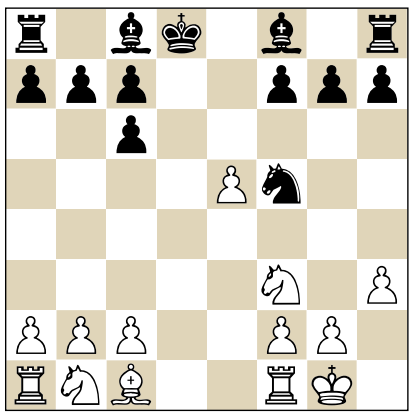
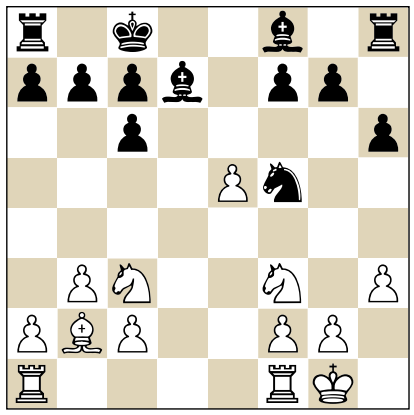
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RL 7.4 – C67
Magnus Carlsen
Viswanathan Anand
Sochi 2014 (11)

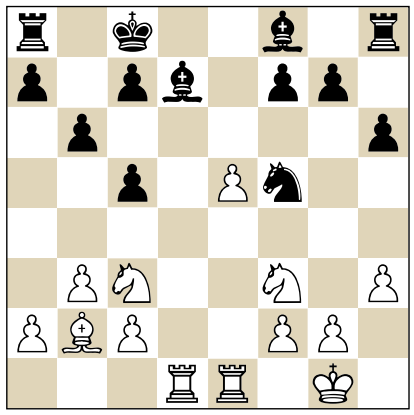
1.e4
By this point, it had become clear that Magnus would stick to this one. He had run no risk in any of his White games and in some he even managed to exert some pressure.
1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6
And so it's the Berlin again.
4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.h3



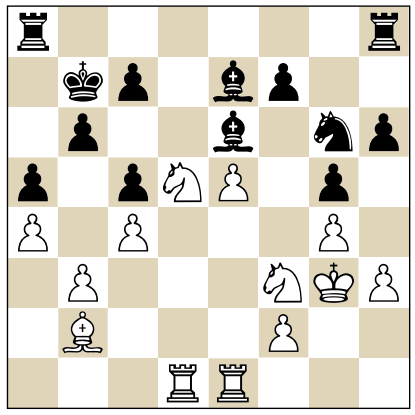
9...♗d7
Frankly, I don't think there was anything that was bothering team Anand in the 9...♔e8 variation, which he had used twice, but with just two games left, Anand decided that he wanted the game to be more double-edged. For that purpose this move is definitely a better try.
10.♘c3
Generally, if White starts with 9.h3, he is going for 10.♖d1 here, when Black plays either 10...♔c8 or the modern 10...♗e7!?, invented by The Hammer and popularized by Magnus himself.
10...h6
It would be hard to name all possible variations here. Black often toys with the move order, either ...h6 first or ...b6, or ...♔c8, maybe ...c5, maybe not, sometimes maybe ...a5. Well, it's a jungle.
11.b3 ♔c8 12.♗b2



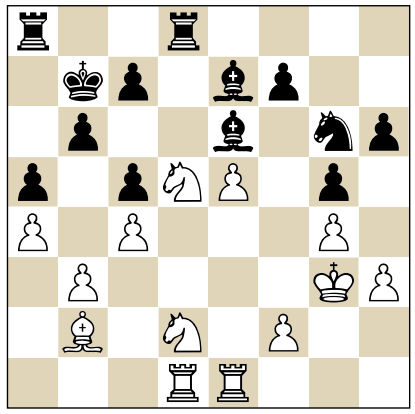
12...c5!? Originally, the common opinion was that ...c5 shouldn't be played when the knight is still on c3, since it can then reach the ideal d5-square in one go. That was the lesson Kramnik taught us when facing Kasparov in their famous struggle in London in 2000. Chess, however, has changed since then, and now Houdini says this move is alright as well.
13.♖ad1 b6 14.♖fe1!?
Aiming for a long and complicated game, which is always a double-edged decision when facing the Berlin Defence.
14.♘d5 is more straightforward, but it allows the complications starting with 14...a5 15.a4 c4, which Magnus understandably didn't want to go for. There have been plenty of high-level games on this topic.



14...♗e6!? An interesting novelty, aiming for one of the standard set-ups that appeal to my aesthetic sense.
15.♘d5 g5!
Black cannot allow ♘f4, as his bishop on e6 is his pride and joy.
16.c4
Up to move 20, both sides have made standard and natural moves.
16...♔b7 17.♔h2 a5
This inclusion may make you think that Black deprives himself of counterplay (...a6/...b5), but as Anand will show later on, this is not the case.
18.a4 ♘e7
A standard manoeuvre.
19.g4 ♘g6 20.♔g3 ♗e7

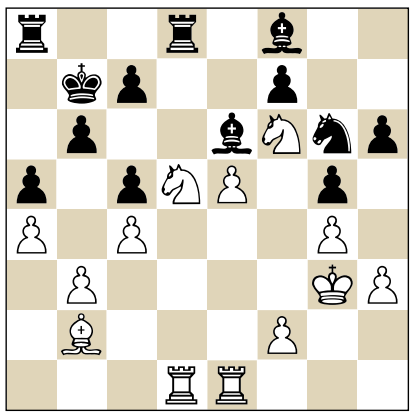


21.♘d2 21.♘f6, with the idea of h4, looked strong to me, but there comes the shocker: 21...b5!!.
21...♖hd8

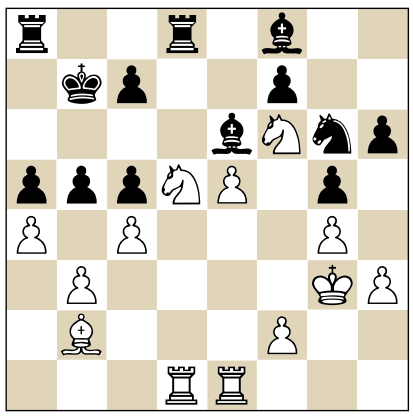


22.♘e4
Here 22.♘xe7! was suggested by the engine, but other than Fabiano Caruana and Alexander Grischuk, I don't think there is a player in our universe who is capable of making such a move. The knight on d5 is so gorgeous: 22...♘xe7 23.♘e4 ♘g6 24.f3, and both sides are probably stuck without a plan. But maybe White can move around and aim for an eventual opening of the kingside with f4 or h4: 24...♖ab8 25.♘f2!?.
22...♗f8 23.♘ef6
On the face of it, White has a pretty impressive position, with no signs

of black counterplay, but as Magnus correctly pointed out afterwards, his position is quite vulnerable. There is tension on the d5-square, there is some around e5, too, and Black can add some additional pressure with ...♘e7 or ...♗g7. In fact, Black needs just one more angle to touch White's position and a collapse is near. And so Anand found it.



23...b5!! Here I suddenly thought of the possibility of Anand actually *winning* this match without a tiebreak! That tells a lot about my emotional instability, but also about Anand's play. So far he has played this Berlin endgame the way it is meant to be played. Taking care of the king, connecting the rooks, regrouping all pieces harmoniously, and then striking!

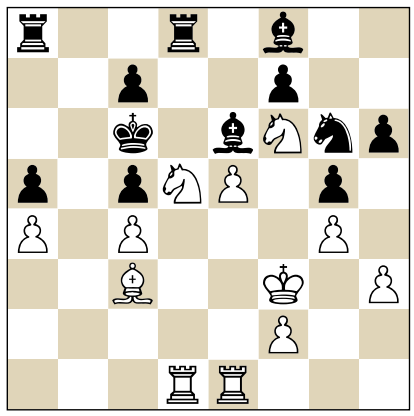


24.♗c3

Magnus tries to keep the position under control. The position after 24.axb5 a4 25.bxa4 ♖xa4 is really not one you want to have as White: 26.♖c1, and now Black can increase the pressure in a couple of ways. For instance with 26...♗e7!? or 26...♘f4!?, and there definitely is no reason for White to panic, but he has undoubtedly been put onto the defensive here.

24...bxa4 25.bxa4 ♔c6 26.♔f3!

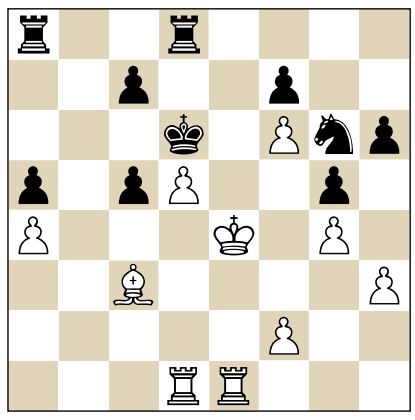
Seeing his centre collapse, Magnus decides to add his last resource, his king, to the construction. You have to imagine Spiderman, trying to hold up a falling bridge, as he always does quite effectively, with a torn costume, spread arms and legs, a dozen spider webs held in each hand... Or was it Batman holding a falling train? Anyway, you get the point; I like sci-fi.



26...♖db8?!

Anand felt that any further action in the centre would not yield him anything, but he was wrong. As he later admitted, he was no longer thinking clearly at this point. He collapsed.

The last evil straw Vishy needed to add was 26...♗e7! Spiderman would have been physically incapable of keeping it all together: 27.♔e4 ♗xf6! 28.exf6 ♗xd5+! 29.cxd5+ ♔d6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and Black is better here, with the d5-pawn falling after ...♖e8+. Don't get me wrong, Black is far from winning, but he is definitely on top here: 30.♔d3 ♔xd5 31.♔c2+ ♔c6 32.♖xd8 ♖xd8 33.♖e4, with good drawing chances for White. The good old ∓ sign applies here.

27.♔e4 ♖b4 (??)

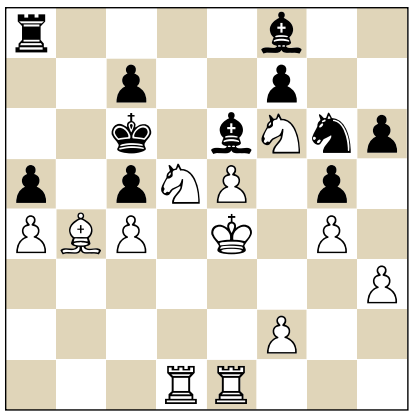
Let's attach a double question mark in brackets to this move, as it was connected with a wrong idea. The move in itself is in fact not bad. But 27...♖b3! was the way to play, keeping the position balanced. In fact, Black is still to be preferred: 28.♖b1 ♖a3!? (28...♖ab8 29.♖xb3 ♖xb3. Now tak-

ANASTASIA KARLOVICH

The old and new World Champion with a man he happily expressed his gratitude to, Andrei Filatov, the President of the Russian Chess Federation.

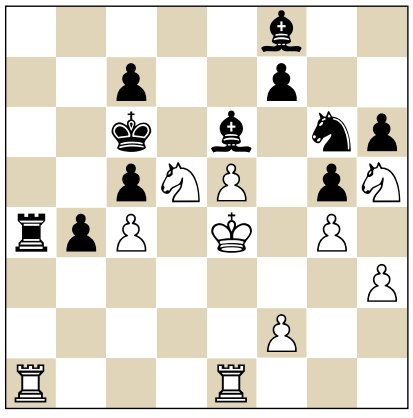
ing the pawn is not a good idea, but 30.♖c1! ♖a3 31.♖a1! holds comfortably) 29.♖a1 ♖xc3!? 30.♘xc3 ♗xc4. This is the exchange sac Anand should have gone for.

28.♗xb4



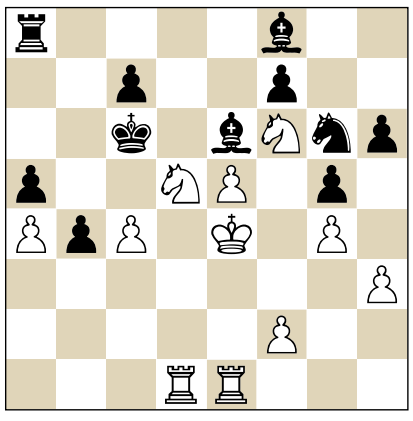
28...cxb4??

This is the actual blunder, played after only a few seconds. Essential was 28...axb4!, keeping an eye on the a4-pawn: 29.♘h5 (otherwise ...♗g7 would create many pins) 29...♖xa4 30.♖a1, and now crazyhouse starts:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30...♗xd5+ 31.cxd5+ ♔b5 32.♖xa4 ♔xa4 33.♖a1+ ♔b5, and this insane position is objectively equal, according to the almighty computer. Both sides will push forward.



> 'You have to imagine Spiderman, trying to hold up a falling bridge with a torn costume, spread arms and legs, a dozen spiderwebs held in each hand...'

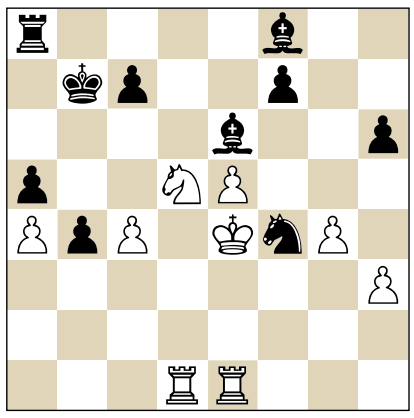
29.♘h5!

Followed by f4, getting to the heart of Black's position, the e6-bishop. And not 29.h4 ♘xh4 30.f4 ♘g2!.

29...♔b7 30.f4 gxf4

30...♗d7 was a better chance, but after 31.f5 ♗xa4 32.fxg6 fxg6 33.♘hf6 Black will take on d1, immediately or after a check, however, he will still be a piece down. But the passed pawns give Black some hope.

31.♘hxf4 ♘xf4

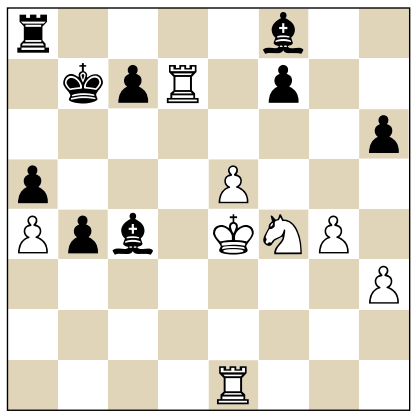


32.♘xf4!

Very important.

32...♗xc4 33.♖d7!

It takes some time to realize it, but Black's position is collapsing.



33...♖a6

Or 33...♔c6 34.♖d4 ♗a2 35.♖c1+ ♔b7 36.♖d7 ♖c8 37.♘d5! b3 38.♘c3 b2 39.♘xa2 bxc1♕ 40.♘xc1, and White is winning.

While 33...♖c8 34.♖c1 ♗a2 leads to the same position as in the 33...♔c6 line after 35.♘d5!.

34.♘d5! ♖c6 35.♖xf7

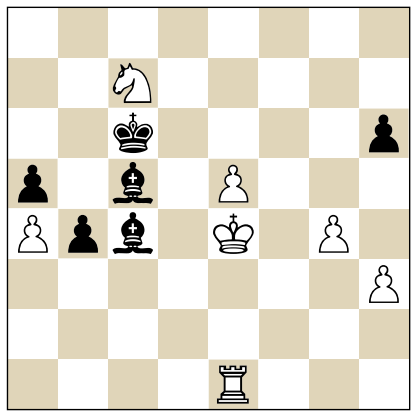
White is too much material up.

35...♗c5 36.♖xc7+

The most practical solution.

36...♖xc7 37.♘xc7 ♔c6

Trying to cause problems till the very end, but as usual Magnus is ruthless.



38.♘b5! ♗xb5 39.axb5+ ♔xb5 40.e6 b3 41.♔d3 ♗e7 42.h4!

The white pawns are much more efficient.

42...a4 43.g5 hxg5 44.hxg5 a3 45.♔c3

Black resigned. And so Magnus Carlsen did it again! ■

Sochi 2014

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		TPR
Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2863	½	1	0	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	.	6½	2857
Viswanathan Anand	IGM	IND	2792	½	0	1	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	.	4½	2798

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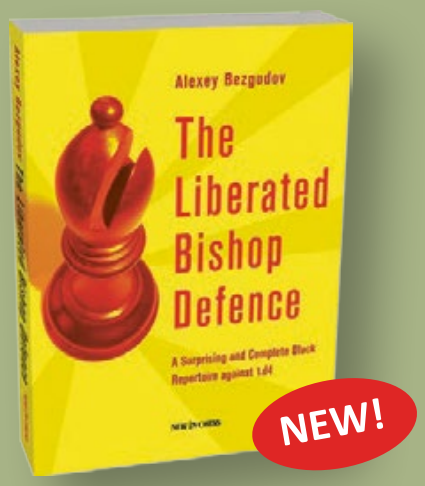

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Demis Hassabas: 'It feels self-indulgent to spend all your talents just beating another human.'
(The former child chess prodigy, who gave up chess at 13 and went on to found an AI company that was bought by Google for £400 million, while talking to Dominic Lawson in the new BBC Radio 4 series Across the Board)

Mike Tyson: 'Everyone has a plan, until they get hit.'

Jerry Seinfeld: 'Marriage is like a game of chess except the board is flowing water, the pieces are made of smoke and no move you make will have any effect on the outcome.'

Martin Amis: 'My chances of a chess brilliancy are the "chances" of a lab chimp and a typewriter producing King Lear.'
(In his 1993 book, Visiting Mrs. Nabokov)

Alan Rufus: 'Life is like a game of chess. To win you have to make a move. Knowing which move to make comes with insight and knowledge, and by learning the lessons that are accumulated along the way. We become each and every piece within the game called life.'
(In his spiritual self-help book The Master's Sacred Knowledge)

J.H. Blackburne: 'Chess is a kind of mental alcohol... unless a man has supreme self-control. It is better that he should not learn to play chess. I have never allowed my children to learn it, for I have seen too much of its evil results.'

Julian Barnes: 'Chess is a game of courteous aggression.'

Vladimir Nabokov: 'Of all my Russian books, *The Defence* contains and diffuses the greatest "warmth", which may seem odd seeing how supremely abstract chess is supposed to be.'

Emanuel Lasker: 'These Hypermodern players who object to 1.e4 will play about 20 moves in which nothing happens; then the annotator will declare with a flourish, "and now White threatens e4!" '

Henri Grob: 'Almost always.'
(When asked if he was married. Apart from being the eponymous inventor of 1.g4, Grob was married nine times.)

Richard P. Feynman: 'I often use the analogy of a chess game: one can learn all the rules of chess, but one doesn't know how to play well. The present situation in physics is as if we know chess, but we don't know one or two rules. But in this part of the board where things are in operation, those one or two rules are not operating much and we can get along pretty well without understanding those rules. That's the way it is, I would say, regarding the phenomena of life, consciousness and so forth.'
(The American quantum physicist quoted by P.C.W. Davies and J. Brown in Superstrings: A Theory of Everything)

Tigran Petrosian: 'I prefer to be called an ex-World Champion. It's the only title they can't take away.'

Hikaru Nakamura: 'Only in Russia do you go out to dinner and the waitress recognizes you! Different level of respect and culture for chess.'

Vassily Ivanchuk: 'Marriage is like taking a pawn on b2 in the Sicilian Najdorf.'

Stephen Fry: 'I first became really interested in the game when I heard about the Smyslov Screw... Whenever Smyslov moved a piece from one square on to another he had a habit of twisting it, as if screwing it into the surface of the board. Others might drop their man lightly or bang it aggressively, Smyslov gently screwed it in. The psychological effect of such a move can be devastating. It looks so permanent, so deliberate, so absolutely assured.'

David J. Morgan: 'A writer, on the Nice Olympiad, said the players did not seem to be so well dressed as at the Siegen Olympiad, 1970. Of course not. Their clothes were four years older.'
(In his British Chess Magazine Quotes and Queries column, November 1974)

Peter Drucker: 'A chess genius is a human being who focuses vast, little-understood mental gifts and labours on an ultimately trivial human enterprise.
(The Austrian-born American management consultant, educator, and author)

Where Oddballs, Hustlers and Masters Meet

The chess tables in front of the Au Bon Pain café attract a motley crowd of players all through the day.

During a two-week long research spell in Harvard University's libraries this summer, **Olimpiu G. Urcan** went undercover as a chess junkie in Boston's iconic Harvard Square. To the author any chess-minded individual passing through Cambridge (Boston, Massachusetts) without paying at least a brief visit to this legendary chess haunt is guilty of near sacrilege.

Located on Massachusetts Avenue, just behind the Harvard train station and across from the Harvard University Yard, the Square is an iconic space. A rich mix of highly popular cafés, shops, and offices, it is the home of Boston's best-known street chess fraternity, gathering at the Au Bon Pain café. Outside this French café, side by side with Harvard University's Health Service offices and the Cambridge Trust Company, in addition to dozens of other regular seats, five massive stone tables and chairs specifically designed for chess represent a locus of ritualistic adulation for a large and diverse crowd of Bostonian chess enthusiasts. On a daily basis, undisturbed by the unusual mix of sounds generated by panhandlers, street musicians

PHOTOS OLIMPIU G. URCAN

Six days a week, 72-year-old Andrey Froim takes the train to Harvard Square. 'Got a game? Two dollars to the winner!'

and heavy traffic, the performers pit their wits against one another. They simultaneously attract passers-by in the same way street illusionists make most of us pause for a moment, smile, point and take a snapshot. Perhaps some of them still remember the Square was briefly featured in Gus Van Sant's 1997 *Good Will Hunting,* featuring Matt Damon, the late Robin Williams, Ben Affleck and Minnie Driver.

'By most accounts, it was Murray M. Turnbull, a Harvard University dropout, who was responsible for the growth of the chess space in the Au Bon Pain café,' Michael Griffin, an IT executive and an active amateur chess player in the Boston leagues told me after we finished playing a couple of games in the Square. According to a profile in Harvard's *Crimsonian* of December 17, 2004, Turnbull, the son of a Harvard professor in applied physics, dropped out of Harvard in 1970 and lived as a homeless person in Berkeley, California for a few years. 'I smoked a lot of pot and played a lot of chess,' Turnbull recounted. In 1974, he returned to Boston where he took a few low-paying jobs before he re-enrolled in Harvard, only to drop out again. In 1982, he began to earn a living playing chess for small stakes in Harvard Square. A year later, when the Au Bon Pain café opened, he became a permanent fixture there with a homemade chess table and a 'Play the Chessmaster' inscription on his straw hat. The chess-friendly management of the Au Bon Pain café entertained the idea of stone tables for the chess players, and eventually sanctioned their construction. 'These days,' Griffin added, 'after inheriting some of his father's wealth, Turnbull is seldom seen in the Square.' But the chess buzz he helped start never really stopped.

A Stealthy Septuagenarian

Andrey Froim, a 72-year-old hailing from St. Petersburg, Russia, holds the current leading role in the Square. A tall, ghostly-looking man with a shaved head, he takes the train every morning to the Square, except Sundays when he spends the whole day with his wife. At 10 in the morning he's slowly installing his equipment on the stone table closest to the sidewalk: a giant, Soviet-style clock,

solid Staunton-style wooden chessmen, and a card in yellow and red inviting players to bring it on: 'Got a Game? Two Dollars to the Winner!!' His appearance can be misleading: military style oversized kakis, XXL T-shirts in strident colours (sometimes featuring a Duck Dynasty leading star, an American flag, or a giant lion), and a baseball cap in camouflage colours (a potent defensive shield against the explosive droppings of birds in the few trees above). Froim's large gangster-like necklace and several metallic bracelets also catch the eye. To his right, a large, military-green bag stays wide open, allowing a peek revealing old printouts and ex-Soviet chess periodicals. He knows little English, but he knows enough English, and chess, to have survived in the area for the past 25 years. He was born in Almaty (today in Kazakhstan) in 1942, but his roots are Romanian. 'My father came from Huși, Romania,' he told me after a long session of games we played together on the first day. 'Then, I lived in Chișinău, Moldova for a long time before I moved to St. Petersburg. Unlike some of the masters who occasionally come here, I am not a professional, but I was a contemporary of [Viacheslav Andreevich] Chebanenko,' he added.

His soft, hesitating speech is nothing like Froim's chess. An adept of Queen's Pawn Openings and the Trompowsky with White and the Caro-Kann with Black, Froim accepts any challenge. His superior positional sense assures him the better game in most encounters, and he seldom loses a game on time. He meets a compliment on his excellent positional chess with a dismissive hand gesture, pointing to the regular crowd of chess amateurs in the place, suggesting that it's just about enough to assure him a certain reputation (and income) in that arena. His clients include amateur players (rated and unrated), Ivy League students, professors, Asian tourists, and any other soul daring enough to accept the challenge and willing to risk two dollars to learn the answer. The list includes some stubborn players (or from Froim's point of view, lucrative customers) who end up losing 30 to 40 dollars during a single afternoon session, unable to accept defeat, and who come back for more week in and week out. For such opponents, Froim uses a large blue dice, marked from 0 to 5, to keep up the score. 'Sometimes, the way he plays is as strategic as it can get,' Alex, one of the regulars in the Square, confessed. It is no real secret that it is to Froim's benefit if some of these players are allowed to live with 'the illusion of hope.'

During one of my earlier days there, upon hearing I was interested in purchasing a chess set, Froim jumped off his seat, ordered a neighbour to look after his board, and walked me to Leavitt & Peirce, a 126-year-old tobacco shop located two buildings down Massachusetts Avenue. Returning to Au Bon Pain with a brand new set and a vinyl board, Froim thought I could use some study materials. He leaned over and picked up a set of papers from his green bag. 'Here, study these. No need to return them to me,' he said with a generous smile. They were printouts of the sixth game between Kasparov and Kramnik from their 2000 match. The bottom of the page revealed they were printed out in February 2000 from Kasparovchess.com.

When no customer is in sight, Froim picks up a small-size booklet of chess problems by Sam Loyd and sets up a few positions for himself. Doing so appears a profitable way of passing time without allowing himself to be distracted by the buffoonery unfolding at the other boards, where 'lesser lights' engage in trash-talk and, rather too often, deplorable chess.

'Stay on your medication.'

Among the curious who count as loyal Square denizens, a few stand out. A young American-Chinese player seldom misses the opportunity to remind all that he is rated 'USCF 1645.' He talks big theory nonstop, offers unsolicited advice, and poses as an expert. Yet whenever things go badly for him over the board, he tries to abandon the game, demanding it be drawn on a rising flood of excuses. Then, there is the well-built man who seems cut out from a 1980s Marlboro commercial, who never forgets to mention his German genealogy. When in trouble over the board, he starts speaking gibberish, claiming it is German, a distracting tactic that much to his dismay seldom works.

'If he happens to lose two or three games in a row against a newcomer, he throws down the dollar notes he owes and offers a terse but telling goodbye: "Thank you. No more."'

An old Armenian player known as 'Misha' is a stronger player than he looks. Short, with grey hair, a set of thick eyebrows, and sporting one of his 1950s-era jackets, he sets up his chessmen and plays blitz for a dollar a game. He tries to select clients carefully, but if he happens to lose two or three games in a row against a newcomer, he throws down the dollar notes he owes on the vinyl board and offers a terse but telling goodbye: 'Thank you. No more.' Then he's off looking for easier kills. 'Bob the Iranian' is a short man in his early 40s, one of the stronger amateurs at the Square. He plays mostly against his

American friends. While his rating could be somewhere in the range of a USCF expert's, he's definitely a grandmaster at trash-talking. Despite his limited command of English, his sound bites catch on quickly, entertaining the crowd. 'Take it but don't break it!' is his trademark *bon mot* whenever a capture is possible.

Without a doubt, a bearded man in his early 50s wearing a worn-out Houghton College T-shirt day in and day out, is the oddest character around. A parody version of Turnbull, he sets up his set closest to the sidewalk with a 'Play the Chessmister' [*sic*] sign. Like others before him, he's no master but that doesn't really matter. The impromptu audience, charmed by the fantasy of a seemingly down-and-out genius behind a set of chessmen, sees what it wants to see, and some are ready to dish out two bucks for a game. On one occasion, a group of five enthusiastic Indian Harvard undergrads approached him with a camera asking him to single out, on tape, the most useful piece of advice he'd have to offer. 'Stay on your medication,' was the alleged master's blunt response. Stunned and rather embarrassed, his young interlocutors made a sudden U-turn leaving the area.

'You've got to be rich to play chess.'

Then, there are a number of homeless characters who congregate at the Square who have a passion for the game infinitely larger than their skill. They often silently look on, but arguably are the best qualified to identify who's who in the area. Finally, the occasional players who visit the place after working hours or during weekend afternoons, are scholars, students, artists or regular workers. They are what most folks might call the 'sane lot.' However, that by no means guarantees they are the most successful in the countless offhand blitz games played in the Square. Sometimes in chess, as in life, sanity is a handicap.

Evenings draw the best players to Harvard Square, much like moths to a flame, and sometimes with the same results. Billy Collins, a 59-year-old homeless Afro-American player, is a fixture there once the sun sets. One of the strongest speed players in the Square, he enjoys a tremendous reputation. Several local newspapers have profiled him over the years, and watching him play and kibitz simultaneously is quite a show: sharp, witty, combative and, almost every time, right, both on and across the board. Fearless in taking on the entire crowd if they disagree with his assessment, he can swiftly switch from imitating a tragic Shakespearean hero to simulating a Hulk-like personality while delivering the killing blow. 'You, puny humans!' comes with mate. One of his eccentricities involves almost always opening the game by attempting Scholar's Mate. A post on the Bostonian.Me blog (April 19, 2012) quoted him: 'I was the world's foremost authority [on Scholar's Mate] at one point because nobody played it. I am really a master, and the only reason I haven't gotten that [rating] is I'm poor. You've got to be rich to play chess.'

A view of Harvard Square focused on the Harvard Coop Bookstore.

The Chessmister in action. 'Stay on your medication!'

The Russian Connection

Billy Collins is reasonably proficient and fast, but the genuinely skilful blitz players on the Square are part of a Russian-speaking syndicate – and I do not use the term pejoratively. The 59-year-old Valery Frenklakh, a proper FIDE Master (current Elo 2295), who struck me as a charismatic mashup of an aged Woody Allen and a wise Mikhail Botvinnik, could be ascribed the role of senior figure. When he's not talking Russian over the phone, he's closely watching the

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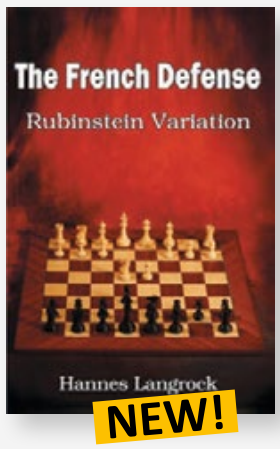

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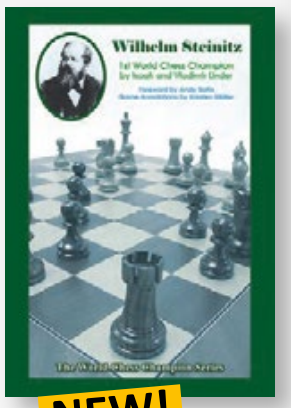

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master-class blitz brawls late into the night, commenting insightfully. An immigrant from the former Soviet Union, he has specialized in coaching in the Boston area for the past 23 years. He seldom plays at Harvard Square, but he can often be seen trying to solve complicated studies with a few American youngsters, some of his former students. He did not hesitate to take on my challenge to solve a Kasparyan domination study. He solved it pretty swiftly and, subsequently, conducted a rich dialogue on a wide variety of topics. Among the subjects covered were training methods, the state of American and Russian chess, the importance of a good chess foundation, his training sessions as a teenager with Isaac Boleslavsky (1919-1977), and the necessity as a coach of maintaining a pristine reputation ('I don't look for new trainees. They look for me.'). As for the then-ongoing FIDE presidential election, Frenklakh expressed his feelings with a certain degree of Russian fatalism: 'With Kirsan Ilyumzhinov you have a bad that you know,' he said, 'with Garry Kasparov, you know, you'll have a bad that you don't know.'

Frenklakh's circle includes a number of younger Russian master-class players, most of them earning a living as chess coaches in the Greater Boston area. Among them are National Masters Vadim Mortirosov and Ilya Krasik, widely acknowledged as the top blitz experts in the Square. Having observed both, I believe it safe to say that the best blitz played in the evenings is far superior to that pounded out during the day. Casual tourists, of course, would have no way of knowing this.

A Boisterous *Enfant Terrible*

International Master Marc Esserman (current Elo 2424), a former student of Harvard College and captain of the Harvard Chess Club's team, is looked at by many as the *enfant terrible* of the Square. A tall, bespectacled 30-year-old who once flirted with professional tennis in Miami, Florida, Esserman scored a few good results in recent years but he is not yet a bona fide grandmaster. But some grandmasters know him well. Esserman's most famous game is his Morra Gambit victory over Loek van Wely in the 2011 U.S. Open. The Dutch Grandmaster, who subsequently visited and played in Harvard Square himself, ended up writing an enthusiastic foreword for Esserman's widely-praised *Mayhem in the Morra* (published in 2012 by Quality Chess).

> 'As if hypnotized, speeding passers-by suddenly turn idle at the sight of dancing fingers wielding plastic chessmen.'

Esserman passes by the Square rather often but only seldom engages in play against well-known associates or friends. His real shtick there is a (minimum) 5 dollar a game deal, in which he's always ready to negotiate odds against weaker opposi-

tion. He enjoys the reputation of an extremely fast, aggressive blitz player. 'The shortest blitz game I've played was 45 seconds,' you'd hear him bragging loudly in front of the Au Bon Pain while negotiating odds and dismissing any kind of groundless challenges to his status in real life or online at *Chess.com*, a website where he owns a bullet rating of 2938 and offers online chess lessons for 100 dollars an hour.

Late one August evening, while Esserman was engaging in a few smooth one-minute games against the Russians, Frenklakh leaned over and whispered in my ear: 'I taught Esserman to start playing for small stakes. I told him that playing for something makes it more meaningful. It's more serious. It stops being a joke thing. I learned that from Fischer. He was always playing for something.' Upon observing a visitor watching one of his games, Esserman wasted no time in popping his usual question: 'Are you playing for money?' When he can't find a client, he's often teasing the rest of the Square's regulars before taking off. Yet he often returns a couple of hours later. If confronted on various chess matters, he gets really loud and aggressive, disturbing the other games in progress. 'It's unheard of to pass by the Harvard Square and *not* play Billy Collins!' he exclaimed one evening trying to arrange a blitz match for stakes between Collins and a New York acquaintance. Almost unable to stand it anymore, one of my opponents exclaimed while desperate to extricate himself from a difficult position: 'Oh, c'mon, Marc. Can you please stop being such a bitch?' Stunned for a second, Esserman leaned in, his forehead touching the daring individual's ear, and whispered a few choice words that swiftly silenced the heretic.

Like many other public chess spaces in the United States, and indeed throughout the world, Harvard Square abounds with a cryptic devilry that intrigues the uninitiated and chains the converted. As if hypnotized, speeding passers-by suddenly turn idle at the sight of dancing fingers wielding plastic chessmen. A miniature coliseum for valiant mental gladiators, the Square's stone-made chess tables have the unexpected power to subject the dignified professor to ridicule, while elevating the humble vagrant to fleeting local fame. The stone tables both suspend reality and create their own, a reality ever so far away from the glitzy halls of elite chess for big bucks, and one populated by the oddball, the hustler and the master, often all in one.

Then again, perhaps Harvard Square chess is not so far from 'real life' after all. ■

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Moscow

Grischuk on the rampage

The Tashir International Tournament in memory of Tigran Petrosian was anything but a tribute to the style of the 9th World Champion, which was marked by caution and solidity. Unless the players were familiar with the tactical prowess and aggression that 'the Tiger' happily demonstrated when playing blitz. The big star was Alexander Grischuk. The 31-year-old Muscovite was in a class of his own, playing with abandon and winning 4 of his 7 games. In the process he crossed the 2800 barrier and rose to third place in the world rankings. Armenian trainer and theoretician **Ashot Nadanian**, who came to Moscow as Levon Aronian's second, shares his impressions.

For a chess tournament to be a successful and memorable event, two conditions are necessary: a generous sponsor and a skilful organizer. For the tournament dedicated to the 85th birthday of the ninth World Champion Tigran Petrosian, these two conditions had been more than met. What's more, the powerful tandem of the Tashir Group (the sponsor) and the Russian Chess Federation (the organizer) was reinforced by the commitment of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (who is also President of the Armenian Chess Federation!), who agreed to head the tournament organizing committee.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan made the first move in the game Aronian-Ding Liren.

My role was that of second of Levon Aronian, Armenia's current chess hero. Levon and I arrived in Mos-

Alexander Grischuk was in great shape and finally crossed the 2800 barrier. After only seven rounds the Muscovite finished way ahead of two super-GMs who have been on the other side of the 2800 themselves.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

cow the day before the opening ceremony. After checking into the comfortable Novotel Hotel in Moscow City, the brand-new financial centre in the South-West of the Russian capital (a 15-minute metro ride from Red Square), we immediately set off to the Armenian Cemetery, where Tigran Petrosian is buried. There, at the same cemetery and not far from Petrosian's last resting place, we also came across the grave of the outstanding Russian writer Andrey Platonov, whose work is very highly rated by Levon and me. And then our next destination was the Vagankovo Cemetery, where Vysotsky and Tsvetaeva are buried...

Then we took the metro to the Central Chess Club on Gogolevsky Boulevard in the centre of Moscow, where we bought several recent issues of *64*. We continued our search for the latest chess (and not only chess) literature in the famous House of Books, known even to many foreigners as the Dom Knigi. After buying some books we took a long walk in the drizzling rain as far as Kuznetsky Most. And when our legs were already pretty tired, we returned to our Novotel Hotel (owned by the Tashir Group, a real estate firm headed by Samvel Karapetyan, an Armenian-born Russian businessman who, with a net worth of $3.8 billion, is the richest ethnic Armenian in the world – ed.) where all the players stayed and where the Petrosian Memorial would start the next day. Having accumulated some positive emotions, we impatiently awaited the start of the tournament.

The next day the opening ceremony took place in the presence of FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, as well as prominent figures from the fields of culture, sport and business. A documentary film about Tigran Petrosian was shown. And after that – music, wine and tasty food. We were happy with the pairings, as Levon had an

MARIA EMELIANOVA

A shower of golden confetti told the players, sponsors and other dignitaries that it was time to celebrate the end of the Petrosian Memorial with food and drink.

extra White game, which is not unimportant in such a short tournament of only seven rounds.

In the first round, Levon was White against Gelfand, who from an English Opening managed to reach a totally drawn rook ending. However, exploiting the weakness of the black c-pawn, Levon was able to strengthen his position move by move until an inaccuracy on the 41st move allowed Gelfand to breathe freely again. After this the game soon ended in a draw.

The Ding Liren-Kramnik and Leko-Morozevich games also ended in draws, but Alexander Grischuk confidently punished Ernesto Inarkiev, by far the lowest-rated player in the tournament, for his careless opening play, thus laying the first stone of his eventual tournament victory.

In the second round, Levon had Black against Morozevich and had to work hard to make a second draw. Afterwards he was critical of his play, as he had made two endgame slips, which fortunately had no negative consequences. But it looked as if he was not in the best of forms, although his play could not really be called bad.

In the meantime, Grischuk scored a second win – this time with black against Gelfand – consolidating his lead. This important win enabled Grischuk to cross the 2800 mark for the first time.

The first move of Levon's game in Round 3 against Ding Liren – 1.c4 – was made by the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, who had found time to pay a visit to the Petrosian Memorial. A quiet variation with g3 in the Grünfeld Defence arose, in which Levon had a microscopic advantage. The young Chinese player kept making minor inaccuracies, and soon Levon had fairly solid reasons to start playing for a win. With subtle play he was able to win two pawns in a rook ending, but by that time Black had managed to activate his king and the extra pawns had to be returned, with a third draw as a result.

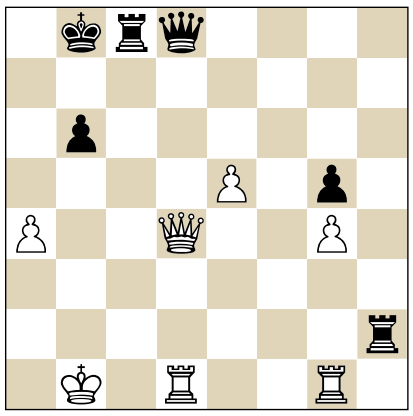
Obviously, the sensation of the round was Grischuk's third successive win! On this occasion his victim was Morozevich. As Grischuk had also won the last three games in his previous tournament, against Caruana, Kasimdzhanov and Dominguez at the Baku Grand Prix, he now had a six-win streak, and inevitably the first comparisons with Caruana's amazing seven-win streak in St. Louis were being made.

However, after the rest day, which coincided with the Opening Ceremony of the World Championship match in Sochi, Grischuk's winning streak came to an end when his Black game against Ding Liren ended in a draw. As the other games were also drawn, the Russian kept a comfortable one-point lead.

Levon's fourth-round game against Leko took a difficult course. As Black in a Ragozin Defence he encountered some serious opening preparation by his opponent. Peter has always been famed for his good opening preparation, but on this occasion it seemed as if he had studied everything as far as mate itself. With rapid, confident and very strong play he caused Levon to blunder on the 21st move, after which White gained a very strong and probably irresistible attack. But here Peter faltered, and in a position in which the attack was developing of its own accord and Peter could simply have played spontaneously, he sank into thought and failed to find a forced win. Another draw, which on this occasion was by no means a dis-

appointment. As Winston Churchill said: 'Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result.'

The game Morozevich-Inarkiev saw a remarkable case of reciprocal chess blindness when the black player failed to punish a tactical oversight.



Morozevich-Inarkiev
Moscow 2014 (4)
position after 41.♕xd4

If White had taken back on d4 with the rook, the position would have remained equal. Note that this was Morozevich's 41st move, so time-trouble was not involved. And Inarkiev also had time enough to find the vicious tactic. But he played **41...♕c7?** and after another handful of moves the game was drawn. Black could have won on the spot with 41...♖c1+!, when White will soon be mated after both 42.♔xc1 ♕c7+ or 42.♖xc1 ♕xd4.

In Round 5, Grischuk picked up where he had briefly left off the day before and won again, scoring his fourth win. The irrepressible Muscovite, who in the meantime had risen to third place in the live ratings, pleased his supporters by outplaying Leko in a complicated middlegame. The only player still able to cherish some vague hopes was Vladimir Kramnik, who drew with Levon in that same round and was occupying second place, looking at a one and a half point gap between him and the leader. In shared third place, Ding Liren, Aronian and Gelfand were already a full two points behind.

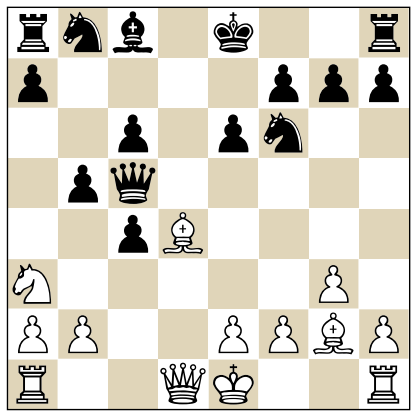
The merely theoretical possibility of keeping Levon's hopes of catching up with Grischuk alive was their individual encounter in Round 6. As we had anticipated in our preparations for the game, Grischuk went for the Grünfeld Defence. After gaining the initiative in a variation which we had analysed in training sessions back in 2011, Levon forced his opponent to think deeply over every move. As a result, Grischuk soon began running seriously short of time. But to his credit he coped brilliantly with all the problems that Levon set him, and he eventually equalized, exploiting an oversight in one of Levon's variations. At the press conference after the game, Grischuk said that he had not expected Levon to agree to a draw, although in fact White no longer had sufficient grounds for playing on. It was obvious that in this game Levon could have set his opponent more serious problems, but in this tournament fortune refused to smile on him. Six draws in six games – I think that previously this had never happened with Levon. There was nothing we could do except joke that the most genuine Petrosian Memorial was being played by his compatriot Levon Aronian.

The long-awaited win finally came in the last round, when Levon, as Black, defeated Inarkiev with a cunning idea that you can read about in my notes to this game further on. This 'consolation goal' helped Levon not only to conclude the tournament on a high note (which is very important psychologically), but also secured him a shared 3rd-4th place with Gelfand – who had beaten Leko in the final round.

With one round to go, Kramnik had progressed to within one point of the leader, thanks to an aggressive and successful assault on Morozevich's king in the penultimate round. And on the last day, Kramnik played Grischuk, albeit with the black pieces.

The game started in a curious manner, as Grischuk arrived 12 minutes late (it was rumoured that he had been glued to the screen of his computer watching the final stages of the 2014 World Poker Series in Las Vegas, where a 10 million dollar first prize was at stake – ed.). Needing only a draw for sole first place, Grischuk played a Catalan, which by Kramnik's admission came as a surprise. And Grischuk went for a crafty line in which Black is obliged either to force a draw by repetition, or worsen his position.

After: **1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3 dxc4 5.♗g2 c6 6.♘e5 ♗b4+ 7.♗d2 ♕xd4 8.♗xb4 ♕xe5 9.♘a3 b5 10.♗c3 ♕c5 11.♗d4**



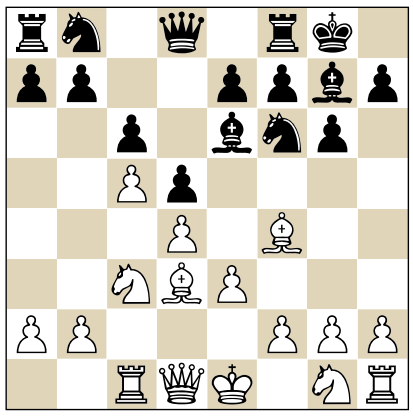
Black went for the repetition and a draw with **11...♕b4+ 12.♗c3 ♕c5 13.♗d4 ♕b4+ 14.♗c3 ♕c5**, as withdrawing the queen from the bishop attacks leaves White with a promising position.

After the game Kramnik said: 'Unfortunately, in nearly all lines – even in risky openings – White often has the possibility of simply forcing Black to repeat moves. Therefore it is hard to decide what to play... In any event, Sasha is in brilliant form, and I congratulate him on his victory in the tournament. To expect to win against him with black... Of course, anything can happen, but I realized that I had only a slight chance. In the end I also demonstrated good play in the tournament and a decent result.' I go along with Kramnik's opinion, and also with his congratulations to Grischuk. Plus-four in such a strong and such a short tournament is a brilliant result.

NOTES BY
Alexander Grischuk

GI 3.11 – D83
Boris Gelfand
Alexander Grischuk
Moscow 2014 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 ♗g7 5.e3 0-0 6.♖c1 ♗e6 7.c5 c6 8.♗d3



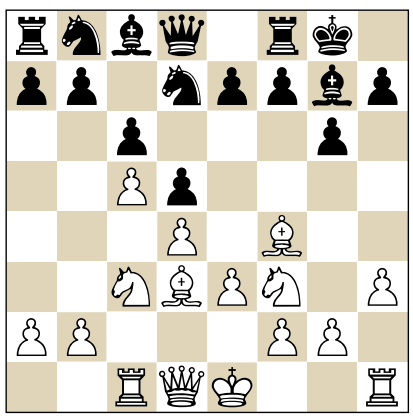
This is one of the most complicated variations in the Grünfeld Defence. Black's next move is a novelty. It looks strange, but it is very important to play ...e7-e5.

8...♗c8!? 9.h3

On every move each side has a mass of different possibilities. I should mention that if 9.♘f3 Black can play 9...♗g4 and, after making three of his first nine moves with his light-squared bishop, he can face the future with confidence.

9...♘fd7! This is the whole point of the move 8...♗c8.

10.♘f3



10...e5! 11.dxe5

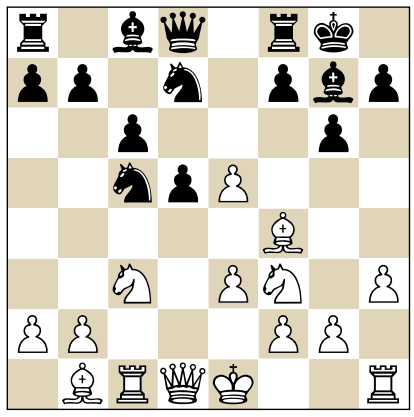
I could not decide whether or not Boris was prepared for 8...♗c8 and 9...♘fd7, but in any event he chose the most critical continuation without any particular hesitation.

11.♘xe5 should lead to a tedious draw after 11...♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♘d7 (13...♕g5 is possible, but pointless, since after 14.♘e2 ♕xg2?? 15.♘g3 the queen is lost) 14.0-0 ♘xe5, although Gata Kamsky and Vladimir Malakhov, who have usually obtained similar positions for Black some five tempi down, may not agree with me.

11...♘xc5 12.♗b1

The most natural move. 12.0-0 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 ♗f5 14.♕e2 ♘d7 was completely harmless, but 12.♗e2 was interesting.

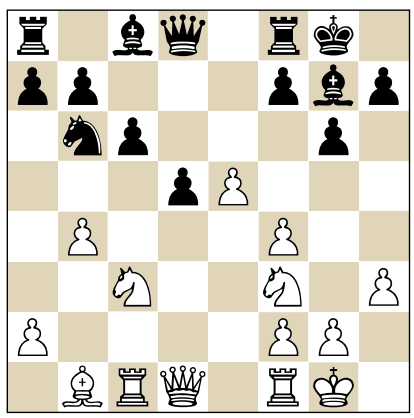
12...♘bd7



13.b4

13.0-0 suggested itself, but possibly Boris did not like the fact that after 13...♕b6 14.♕c2 ♖e8 White begins to have problems with the defence of his e5-pawn.

13...♘e6 14.0-0 ♘xf4 15.exf4 ♘b6



What can be said about this position? As usual, it is all a matter of minor distinctions. If Black's pawn were on h6 (which would be a very real possibility, if the given position had arisen from the Moscow Variation or certain other variations of the Queen's Gambit), then his king would be weakened, the undermining move ...f7-f6 would not be possible, and White's prospects would be better. But with the pawn on h7, as in our game, I prefer Black's position.

16.♕d4

A rather strange move. White as though wants to add fuel to the fire, by provoking ...f7-f6.

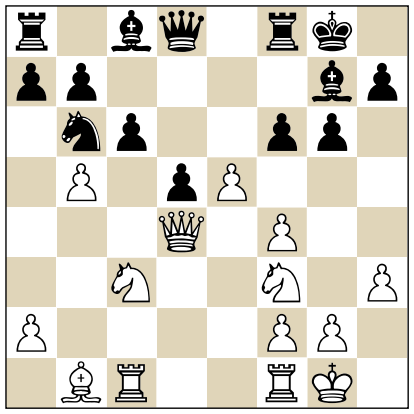
16.♖e1 was more natural and better.

16...f6!

Of course! I am ashamed to say that I thought the game might not last long, but Gelfand's strong reply brought me back to earth.

17.b5!

Urgently creating counterplay.



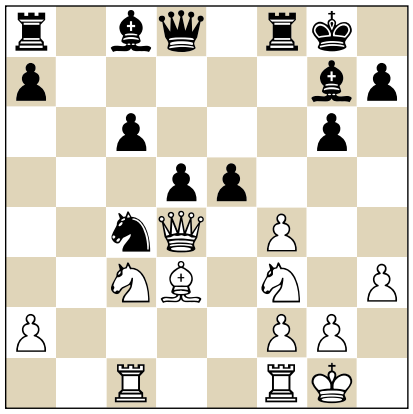
17...♘c4

I will not seriously criticize this move, but even so 17...fxe5! was significantly stronger, forcing White to take on e5 with his knight: 18.♘xe5 (not 18.fxe5? ♖xf3 19.gxf3 ♕g5+), and only now 18...♘c4!, when after 19.♖fe1 (now 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.♗d3 leads to a position from the game) 19...♘xe5 20.fxe5 ♗h6 Black has a significant advantage, although the position remains complicated.

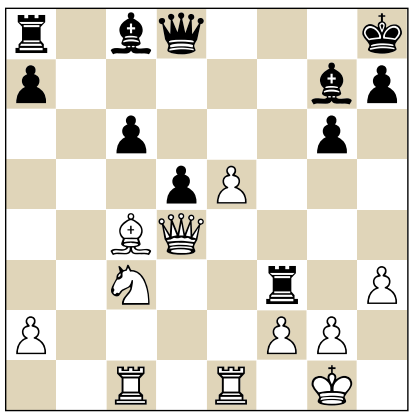
18.bxc6

During the game I though that 18.♕c5 ♕b6 19.♕e7 was interesting, but in fact Black wins by 19...fxe5 20.♘xe5 (20.fxe5 ♖xf3 21.gxf3 ♗xh3) 20...♗f6.

18...bxc6 19.♗d3! fxe5

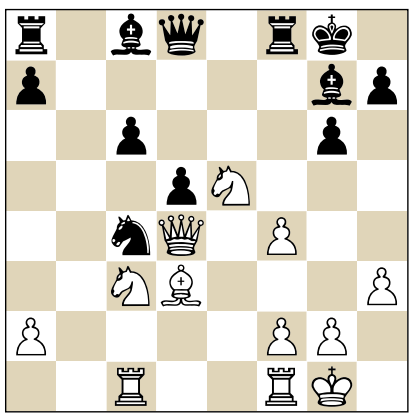


20.♘xe5? White fails to exploit Black's error. Correct was 20.fxe5 ♖xf3 21.♗xc4 ♔h8 (nothing is given by 21...♗xh3 22.♘xd5 ♕g5 23.♘f4+ ♔h8 24.♘xh3 ♖xh3 25.♕d7 either) 22.♖fe1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and I have been unable to find anything better than 22...♗xh3 23.gxh3 dxc4 (23...♖xh3 is tempting, but with a series of only moves White defends: 24.♗f1 ♖h4 25.♕d3 ♕g5+ 26.♗g2 ♗xe5 27.♘e2) 24.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♘e4 ♖ff8 26.♖xc4 ♗xe5 27.♖xc6 ♗d4, with a symbolic advantage for Black.



20...♗xe5!
The most difficult move in the game. The exchange of the dark-squared

'The exchange sacrifice was his trademark'

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Special guest Rafael Vaganian guides Armenian President Serzh Sargyan through the photo exhibition dedicated to Tigran Petrosian.

Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian (1921-1984), the 9th World Champion, held his title from 1963, when he defeated Mikhail Botvinnik, till 1969, when he was dethroned by Boris Spassky in their second match. Petrosian is still a national hero in Armenia. At the Tashir tournament we asked Armenian GM Rafael Vaganian, about the role of Petrosian in chess history and in his personal life.

'Petrosian was one of the brilliant champions in the history of chess. A great positional player, a genius in his tactical vision, a unique player. He sensed his opponent very well. He didn't take risks because he saw a lot for his opponent. He was one of those rare very strong players who always played objectively. And because of that he scored fewer points. When playing someone who we think is a weaker player, we often take risks at the expense of the position. You overestimate yourself and underestimate your opponent. Where Petrosian made, say, three draws, Tal would win two and lose one. So Petrosian would score half a point less.

'In the years before his first match against Spassky, I believe Petrosian was the stronger player. Spassky told me that he was stronger in 1966, but Petrosian stole that match from him. Tigran outplayed him completely. Spassky felt that he was weaker in their second match, but Petrosian had also weakened in 1969. How old was he by then? 40?

'Petrosian played a huge role in my life. If it weren't for Petrosian, I probably wouldn't be a chess player. He was not my ideal in chess, but as an Armenian, what he did for our people... I have always considered Fischer the best chess player in history. But in Armenia we all followed in the wake of Petrosian.

Lucky

'His positional play was unbelievable and I had the opportunity to look at chess with him at the board. I've been lucky in life that I've met people like him and analysed with them at the board. From 1972, when we were playing the USSR-Yugoslavia match, I was on the USSR team with

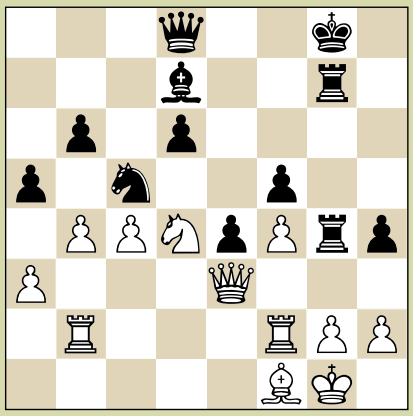
An explosion of joy. Tigran Petrosian is received as a hero in Yerevan after defeating Mikhail Botvinnik in the 1963 World Championship match.

Petrosian, Kortchnoi and Stein. After that I was part of that team until virtually the end of the Soviet Union, and we often met and analysed a lot, looking at many positions.

'He was a very good blitz player. He was the best blitz player apart from Fischer, and Karpov was possibly also slightly stronger than him then. I remember a tournament in Moscow on some Soviet holiday in which he made only one draw in all his games.

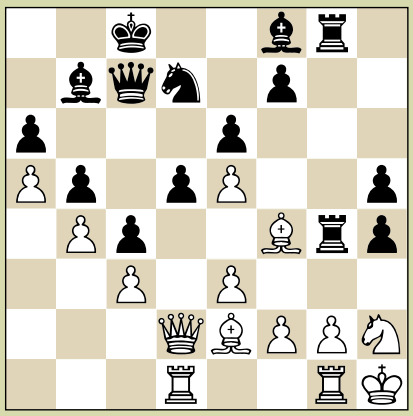
'He played many great games. He beat Keres beautifully, sacrificing a rook in Bled in 1959. And I like a couple of the games that he won against Spassky, when he sacrificed an exchange. His trademark exchange sacrifice. In a large number of his games he made positional exchange sacrifices. For positional reasons, nothing specific. He put an eternal knight instead of a rook on some square and had colossal play in that position.

'The sad thing is that he didn't manage to write a book. It would have been very interesting if Petrosian had commented on his games – what his ideas were, what he was thinking. That's the main thing we don't have. We have almost no analyses by him, very few.'



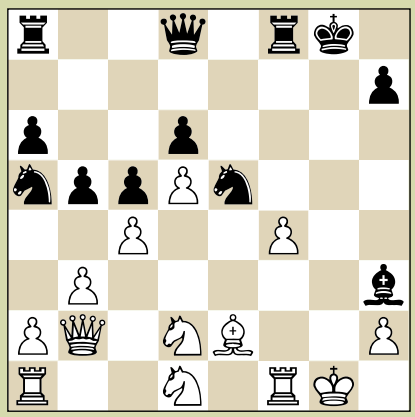
Keres-Petrosian
Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade Candidates' 1959
position after 47.b4

47...♖g3 48.hxg3 hxg3 49.♖fd2 ♕h4 50.♗e2 ♖h7 51.♔f1 ♕xf4+ 0-1



Spassky-Petrosian
Moscow Wch match 1966 (7)
position after 24.♘h2

24...♘xe5 25.♘xg4 hxg4 26.e4 ♗d6 27.♕e3 ♘d7 28.♗xd6 ♕xd6 29.♖d4 e5 30.♖d2 f5 31.exd5 f4 32.♕e4 ♘f6 33.♕f5+ ♔b8 34.f3 ♗c8 35.♕b1 g3 36.♖e1 h3 37.♗f1 ♖h8 38.gxh3 ♗xh3 39.♔g1 ♗xf1 40.♔xf1 e4 41.♕d1 ♘g4 42.fxg4 f3 43.♖g2 fxg2+ 0-1



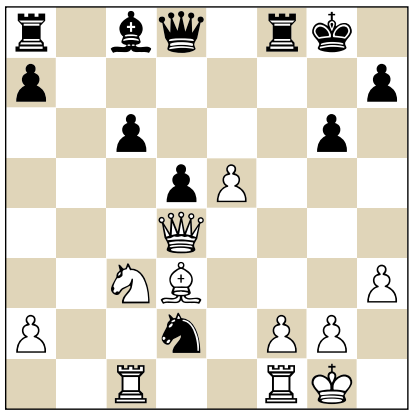
Petrosian-Spassky
Moscow Wch match 1966 (10)
position after 20...♗h3

21.♘e3 ♗xf1 22.♖xf1 ♘g6 23.♗g4 ♘xf4 24.♖xf4 ♖xf4 25.♗e6+ ♖f7 26.♘e4 ♕h4 27.♘xd6 ♕g5+ 28.♔h1 ♖a7 29.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 30.♕h8+ 1-0

bishop looks ugly, but Black unexpectedly develops a strong attack.
The obvious 20...♘xe5 21.fxe5 ♕b6 22.♘e2 ♗d7 was weaker in view of 23.f4 (23.h4!? is also interesting) 23...g5 24.g3! ♗xh3 25.♖f2 ♗d7 26.♕c3, with quite good compensation for the pawn.

21.fxe5 ♘d2!

This is the whole point. It unexpectedly transpires that after ...♕g5 Black will have four pieces attacking the white king.



22.♖fd1

During the game I did not see a win after 22.♖fe1 ♕g5 23.♕e3 ♘f3+ 24.♔f1, but here both 24...♕h5 and 24...♕h4 25.gxf3 ♗xh3+ 26.♔e2 ♖xf3 are decisive.
22.♘e2!? ♘xf1 23.♖xc6! could have led to very interesting complications, although after 23...♘d2! 24.♖d6 ♕a5! 25.♘c3! ♗xh3! White faces an unpleasant fight for a draw:

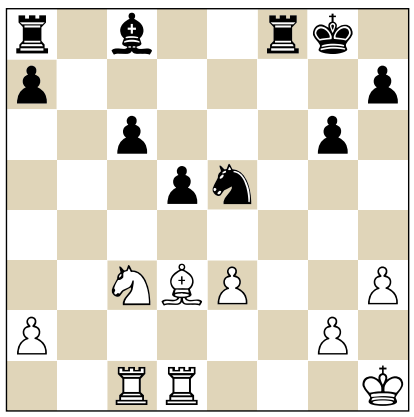
A) 26.♘xd5 ♖ae8! 27.♗xg6 ♘f3+ 28.gxf3 ♕e1+ 29.♔h2 ♕xe5+ 30.♕xe5 ♖xe5 31.♔xh3 hxg6 32.f4 ♖h5+ 33.♔g4 ♔g7 with quite good chances of converting the exchange advantage;

B) 26.♗xg6 hxg6 27.♖xg6+ (27.♕xd2 ♗f5 28.♕h6 ♕c7) 27...♔f7 28.♖f6+ ♔e8 29.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♕xd2 ♗e6 31.♕h6+ ♔e7 32.♕g7+ ♔e8 33.♕h8+ ♔d7 34.♕xa8 ♕xc3 35.♕xa7+ ♔d8, and the king escapes from the checks.
The continuation chosen by Gelfand is the strongest.

22...♕g5 23.♕e3!

After 23.♔h2 ♗xh3 24.♔xh3 ♖f4 White loses immediately.
23.♗e2 ♗xh3 24.g3 ♘f3+ 25.♗xf3 ♖xf3 26.♘e2 ♖af8 27.♖xc6 ♖xf2 28.♕xf2 ♖xf2 29.♔xf2 ♕xe5 was also unsatisfactory.

23...♘f3+ 24.♔h1 ♕xe3 25.fxe3 ♘xe5



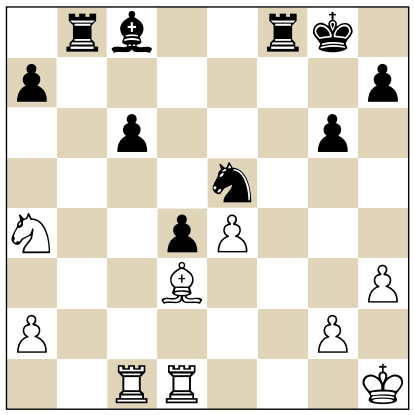
26.e4 A natural move, but I think that 26.♗c2, not allowing ...d5-d4, was stronger. After the possible 26...♗f5 27.e4 dxe4 28.♗xe4 ♖ae8 29.♗xf5 ♖xf5 30.♘e4 White retains quite good chances of a draw.

26...d4!

In the event of 26...♘xd3 27.♖xd3 dxe4 28.♘xe4 ♗f5 29.♖e3 the position, in my view, is closer to a draw.

27.♘a4 ♖b8

Not a bad move, although it involves an oversight. 27...♖f2 was also very strong, with the idea of 28.♖c5 ♘xd3 29.♖xd3 ♖b8!.



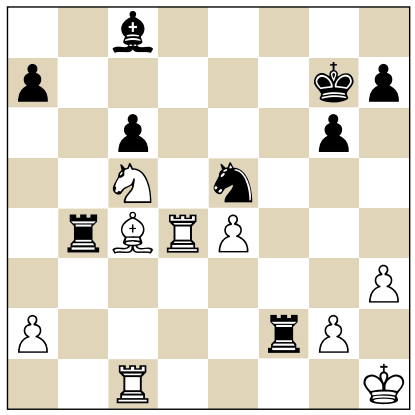
28.♗c4+

It was this move that I overlooked, but overlooked successfully. Now White is probably lost. He should have chosen between 28.♖d2 and 28.♔g1.

28...♔g7 29.♖xd4

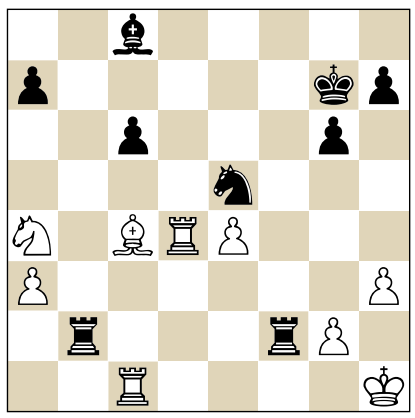
If 29.♗b3 ♖d8 30.♘c5 ♔f6, and Black consolidates.

29...♖b4! 30.♘c5 ♖f2!



31.a3 31...♗xh3 was threatened, and apart from the move in the game White had only one defence, 31.♘d3, but after the forcing line 31...♖d2 32.♘xb4 ♖xd4 33.♗a6 ♖xe4! (but not 33...♖xb4 34.♗xc8 ♖xe4 35.♗b7!, although 33...♖xb4 34.♗xc8 ♔f6! is also not at all bad) 34.♗xc8 ♖xb4 Black should gradually convert his extra pawn.

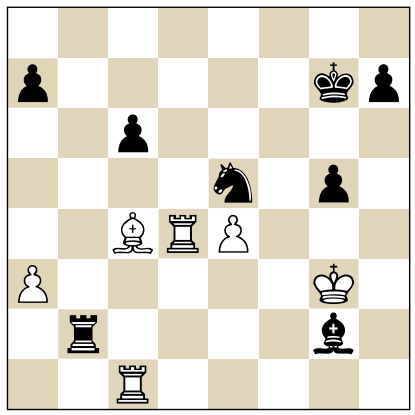
31...♖bb2 32.♘a4



32...♗xh3!

Both 32...♖bc2 and 32...♖bd2 would also have given a big advantage, but the move in the game is even stronger.

33.♘xb2 ♗xg2+ 34.♔h2 ♖xb2 35.♔g3 g5! The king has to be deprived of the f4-square, as otherwise the advantage would pass to White!



MARIA EMELIANOVA

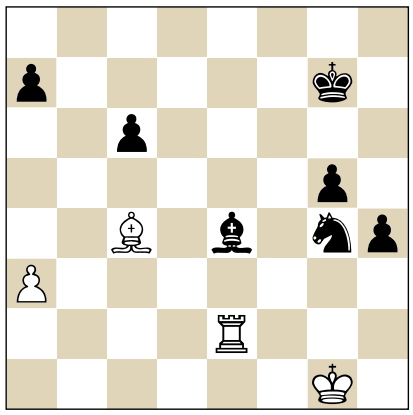
Boris Gelfand has seen enough. Following a long sequence of king moves (worthy 'at best, an ironic smile'), Alexander Grischuk has finally played the decisive breakthrough.

36.♖cd1

White is not helped by either 36.♗f1 ♗xf1 37.♖xf1 h5 38.♖f5 h4+ 39.♔h3 ♖b3+ 40.♔g2 h3+ 41.♔h1 ♘f3, when the pawns are about to promote, or 36.♗d3 ♗f3 37.♖c2 ♖b3 38.♖c5 ♘xd3 39.♖xg5+ ♔h6 40.♖a5 ♗h5 (40...♗xe4 41.♖xe4 ♘c5+ 42.♔f4 ♘xe4 43.♔xe4 ♖b7 44.♖c5 is not so convincing, although even here after 44...♖c7 45.♔e5 ♔g6 46.♔d6 ♖f7 Black should win) 41.♖xa7 ♗g6.

36...h5 37.♖4d2 ♖xd2 38.♖xd2 ♗xe4 39.♖e2 h4+ 40.♔f2 ♘g4+ 41.♔g1?

41.♔f1 ♘f6 was hopeless, but the move in the game could have lost immediately.



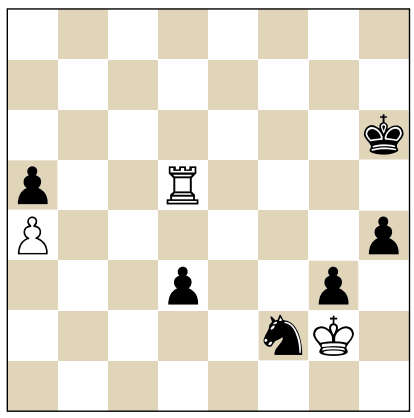
41...♘f6??

Here I betrayed my rule – to stand up after the 40th move, go for a stroll, breathe some fresh air (or have a smoke), since the text-move completed a 'forced' variation which I had calculated some time earlier. The punishment was my worst blunder in the entire tournament and an extra two hours of play. Of course, the elementary 41...h3! 42.♖xe4 h2+ would have won immediately.

42.♗e6 Fortunately, even after 41...♘f6?? Black's position is still won. In White's place I would have launched a counterattack with 42.♖b2, and although analysis shows that after 42...♔g6 43.♖b7 a5 44.♖a7 ♔f5 45.♖xa5+ ♔f4 46.♗f1 g4 47.♔h2 ♘d5 Black wins, he would need to play extremely accurately. Even the computer needs a considerable time to establish a definitive diagnosis.

But in the game everything proceeds much more simply. Boris tries to set up a blockade, but this is an unrealizable dream, and the black pawns inexorably, like cockroaches, advance towards the queening square.

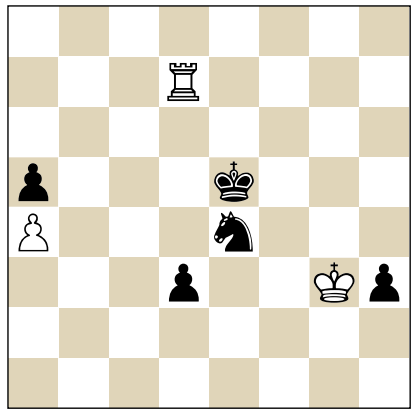
42...♔g6 43.♖e1 ♗f3 44.♖e5 g4 45.♗f5+ ♔h6 46.♗d3 ♗d5 47.♗f1 g3 48.♗h3 ♘e4 49.♗g2 ♘f2 50.♗xd5 cxd5 51.♔g2 d4 52.♖d5 d3 53.a4 a5



54.♔f3

Black's position is now completely won, and my subsequent moves may provoke, at best, an ironic smile. ....♔g6-f7-f8-e8-e7-f6-f5-e6-e5?? What is this?? However, the point is that, although I had seen the decisive breakthrough, I did not want to carry it out before the 60th move, and therefore, to avoid the risk of a threefold repetition of the position, Black takes his king to e5 by a roundabout way, using the maximum possible number of squares.

54...♔g6 55.♖d8 ♔f7 56.♖d4 ♔f8 57.♖d5 ♔e8 58.♖d4 ♔e7 59.♖d5 ♔f6 60.♖d6+ ♔f5 61.♖d4 ♔e6 62.♖d8 ♔e5 63.♖d7 h3 64.♔xg3 ♘e4+



65.♔f3 The point is that if 65.♔xh3 d2 66.♔g2 Black wins by 66...♘d6.

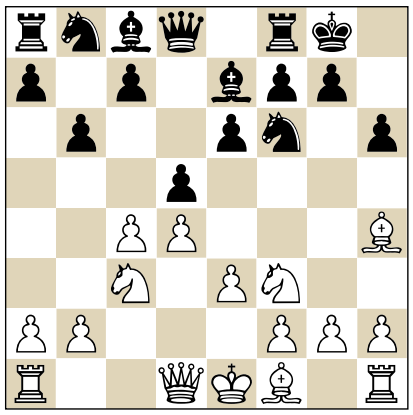
65...h2 66.♔g2 d2 The pawn promotes, and White resigned.

This was the fourth successive game between Gelfand and me which produced a decisive result. It is now hard to believe that a few years ago six successive games (five in Kazan, 2011 and one before that in the Tal Memorial) between us ended in draws. In chess there is a habit of drawing far-reaching conclusions on the basis of literally one or two games, whereas before doing this in poker one usually waits for at least a hundred thousand deals. So I will not draw any conclusions, but simply mention this curious fact.

NOTES BY
Alexander Grischuk

QO 7.1 – D58
Alexander Grischuk
Peter Leko
Moscow 2014 (5)

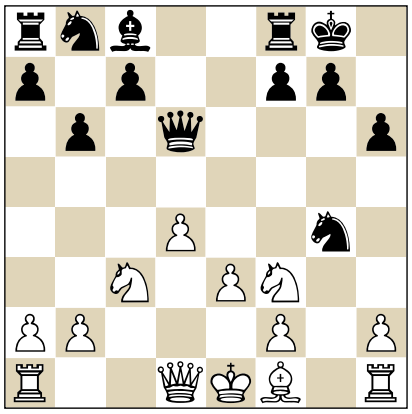
1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗e7 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 0-0 7.e3 b6



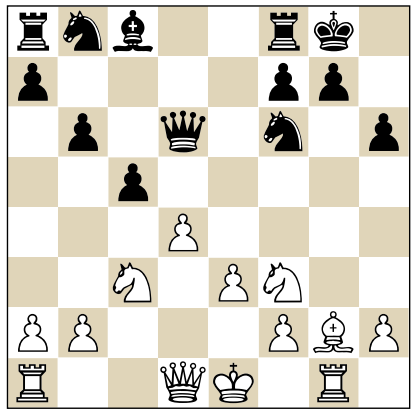
8.g4
Various descriptions of this move can be devised: 'provocative', 'hooligan-like' etc., but it is best to call things by their proper names and write frankly: a second-rate move. The point is that, in my two last meetings with Leko in classical play, Peter twice made a draw with Black without making a single move of his own. So that at any cost I wanted to avoid a repetition of such a scenario. Fortunately, after 8.g4 Peter thought for more than half an hour.

'In my two last meetings with Leko in classical play, Peter twice made a draw with Black without making a single move of his own.'

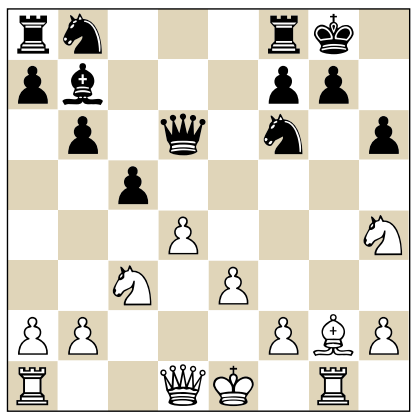
8...♘xg4
A quite sensible decision, but at least five alternatives deserve serious consideration: 8...♘bd7, 8...♘e4, 8...c5, 8...dxc4 and 8...♗b7.
9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.cxd5 exd5
10...♖d8 is also not bad. Generally speaking, an abundance of worthy alternatives on every move can be both a plus and a minus – after all, the time allotted to a game is not unlimited.
11.♘xd5 ♕d6 12.♘c3



12...c5!
Correct! Black immediately initiates play in the centre.
12...♗b7 was much weaker, in view of 13.♖g1, and during the game the following cooperative but attractive variation very much appealed to me: 13...♘xh2? 14.♘xh2 ♕xh2 15.♕g4 g5 16.♖g3! f5? 17.♕f4!! and White wins.
13.♖g1
13.♗g2 deserved consideration, with the idea of 13...♗b7 14.♖g1.
13...♘f6
13...♘c6 14.♗b5!? leads to enormous complications – Ruy Lopez would have been happy.
14.♗g2
I did not want to relieve the tension, so that the move in the game is quite understandable. But, objectively speaking, I should nevertheless have preferred 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.♕d4 ♘bd7 16.♕f4! (I overlooked this nuance) 16...♔h8 17.0-0-0 ♗b7 18.♗e2. There is nothing tragic for Black here, but White retains pressure.



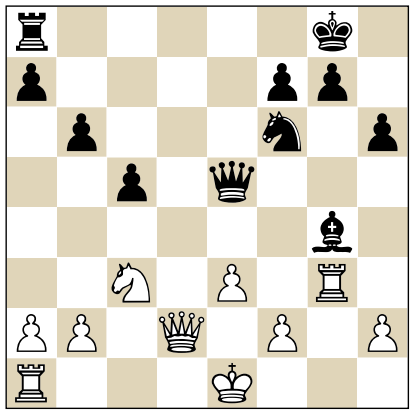
14...♗g4!
The safest, although 14...♗b7 is also fully acceptable. During the game I was intending 15.♘h4, and it was because of this move that Peter preferred 14...♗g4, but in fact Black has as many as three good defences:



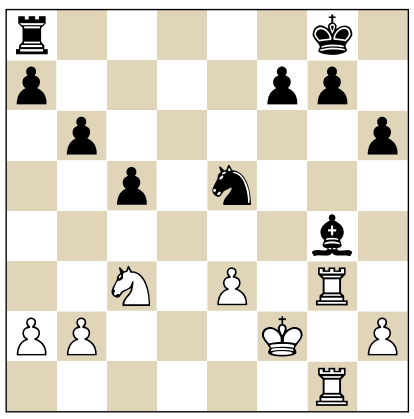
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) The greedy 15...♕xh2 16.♖h1 ♕c7, with very complicated play;
B) The resourceful 15...♘c6!?, exploiting the fact that 16.♘f5 (16.♘e4 ♘xe4 17.♗xe4 is correct) will not do in view of 16...♕xh2;
C) And even the crazy computer line 15...♗xg2 16.♖xg2 cxd4 17.♘f5 ♕d7, leading after 18.♕f3 dxc3 19.♖xg7+ ♔h8 20.♕f4 ♕xf5 21.♕xh6+ ♘h7 22.♖xh7+ ♕xh7 23.♕xf8+ ♕g8 to a pretty draw by perpetual check.
15.♕d2!
15.dxc5 ♕xc5 16.♕d4 ♘bd7 was objectively correct, with tedious equality. On the other hand, in making the move played I calculated a 10-move variation which occurred in the game and gave White an obvious advantage. But what about the fact that on the way White could have had problems? To hell with objectivity!

15...♘bd7 15...♘c6 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 would have led to the same thing. **16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♕xe5 18.♗xa8 ♖xa8** 18...♕xh2?? runs into 19.♖h1. **19.♖g3**

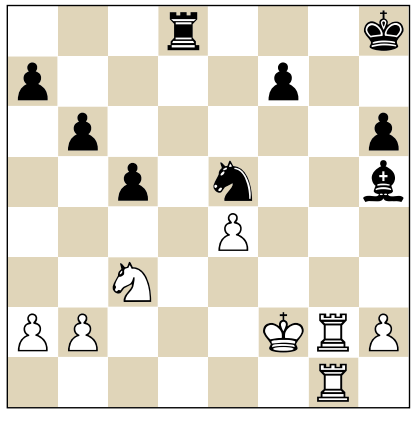


19...♘e4?!
During the game we both thought this move was forced, overlooking two other ways of preventing f2-f3.
In both cases a very precise response is demanded of White, but with correct play he should be able to hold out: 19...♕f5! 20.h3! ♗f3 21.e4! ♘xe4 22.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 23.♔f1 ♖e8 24.♕c3 ♗e2+ 25.♔g1 ♖e5 26.♖e1 ♕d4 27.♖g4 ♕xc3 28.bxc3.
Or 19...♕h5! 20.f3! ♗xf3 21.♕f2! ♗g4 22.♕g2! ♖e8 23.h3 ♗f5 24.♖xg7+ ♔h8 25.♖g3.
20.f4! Forced, but not bad.
20...♘xd2 21.fxe5 ♘f3+ 22.♔f2 ♘xe5 23.♖ag1

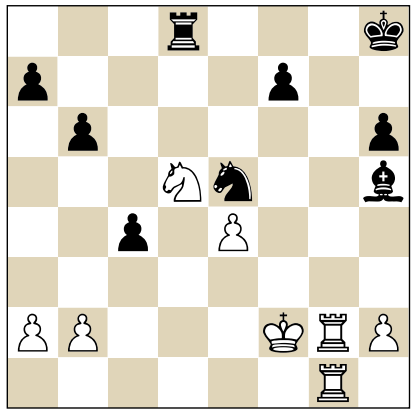


23...♗h5? Essentially the only real mistake in the game. After the only correct move 23...♖d8! 24.♖xg4 ♖d2+ 25.♔f1 ♘xg4 26.♖xg4 ♖xb2 27.♖g2 ♖b4 (27...♖xg2 28.♔xg2 is dangerous for Black) 28.e4 the position is not only objectively drawn, but also, most probably, simply equal.

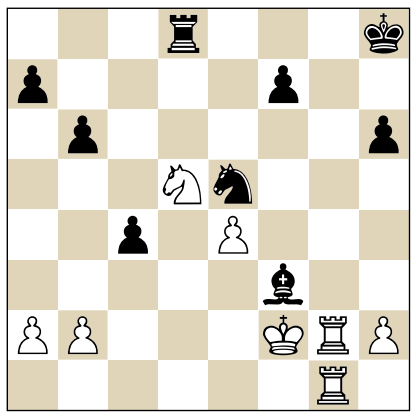
24.♖xg7+ ♔h8 25.♖7g2
Slightly more accurate than 25.♖7g3.
25...♖d8 26.e4
Here I concluded my calculation. The black rook cannot invade on d3 in view of mate in two moves, but this means that Black has no real counterplay and White can calmly set about converting his material advantage.



26...c4?! This leads merely to a weakening of the position. Black should have simply played 26...♗g6 with possibilities of a tenacious defence.
27.♘d5!



27...♗f3? This allows an immediate finish, but also after 27...♗g6 28.♔e3 Black's position, whose queenside has been weakened by the move ...c5-c4, is most probably hopeless.

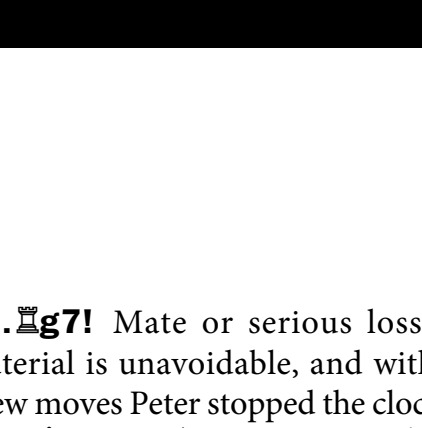


28.♖g7! Mate or serious loss of material is unavoidable, and within a few moves Peter stopped the clock.
28...♗h5 29.♘f6 ♖d2+ 30.♔e3 ♖d3+ 31.♔f4 ♘g6+ 32.♖1xg6 ♖f3+ 33.♔e5 Black resigned.

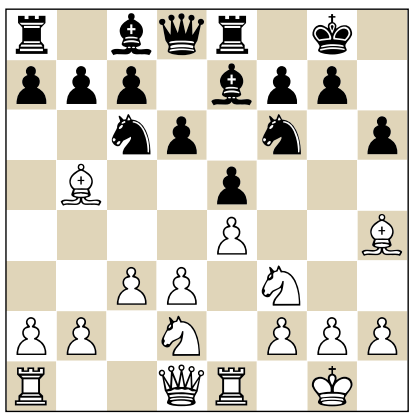
NOTES BY
Ashot Nadanian

RL 7.1 – C65
Ernesto Inarkiev
Levon Aronian
Moscow 2014 (7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3
The Anti-Berlin is a very popular option these days and it is a favourite weapon of many top players, including Carlsen and Anand. White is not in a hurry to force matters and goes for a leisurely manoeuvring fight.



4...♗c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 ♗e7 9.♖e1 d6 10.♘bd2

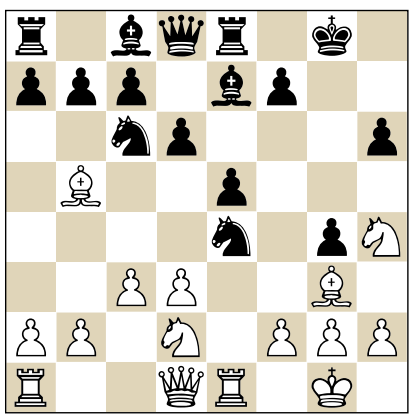


10...g5!? This reckless and sudden pawn thrust we had prepared for one

of the early rounds, but then his opponent did not even play 1.e4. However, the work was not in vain, and in this final round Levon got a chance to apply this interesting idea.

11.♗g3 g4 12.♘h4 ♘xe4

This is the point. Black wins a pawn, but as his king is seriously exposed, White has sufficient compensation.



13.♘xe4

An interesting alternative was 13.♖xe4!? ♗xh4 14.♗xh4 (after 14.♖xg4+?! ♗xg4 15.♕xg4+ ♕g5 16.♕xh4 ♕xd2 Black is better) 14...♕xh4 15.d4 ♗f5 16.d5! a6 (White is better after 16...♗xe4?! 17.♘xe4 a6 18.♗d3 ♘b8 19.g3 ♕e7 20.♕xg4+ ♔f8 21.f4) 17.♗e2 ♘e7 18.♗xg4 ♗xe4 19.♘xe4, and White has compensation for the exchange.

13...♗xh4 14.♗xh4 ♕xh4 15.d4

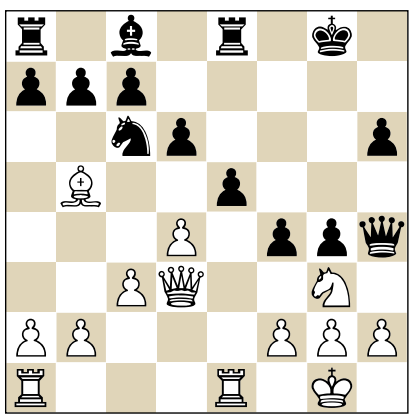
Probably the best. Everything is OK for Black after 15.f4 f5 16.♘g3 ♗d7 17.♖f1 ♖f8.

15...f5 16.♘g3

It would also be interesting to test the other retreat, 16.♘d2.

16...f4 17.♕d3

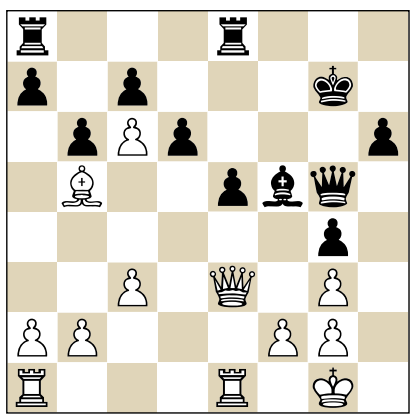
After 17.♘e4 ♔g7 Black is safe.



17...♔g7 A serious mistake is 17...fxg3?? 18.♕g6+ ♔f8 19.fxg3 ♕g5 20.♕h7, and White wins.

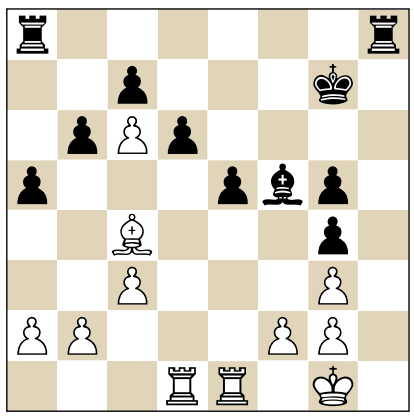
18.d5 This move allows White to restore the material equilibrium.

18...fxg3 19.hxg3 ♕g5 20.dxc6 ♗f5 21.♕e3 b6



22.♕xg5+ It is difficult to say whether this is a good move or not. Although Black's pawns on the kingside get ossified, he gets his hands on the h-file, where he can double rooks and invade the enemy camp. On the other hand, if White does not take on g5, Black will still be able to push ...h5-h4 sooner or later and open up the h-file anyway. And if this happens with the queens still on the board, then it will certainly strengthen Black's attack.

22...hxg5 23.♖ad1 ♖h8 24.♗c4 a5

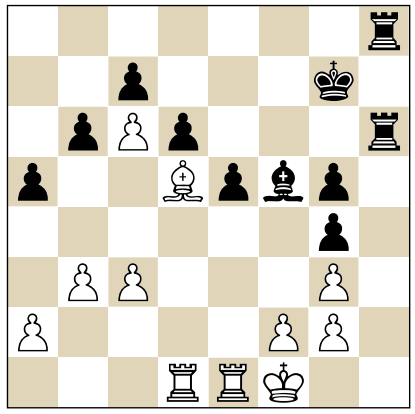


25.b3 I would not call this move an inaccuracy, but I find it a bit strange, because White puts yet another pawn on a square of the same colour as his bishop. And he also helps Black to hook onto the queenside with ...a5-a4 when necessary. 25.♗d5 looks more natural to me.

25...♖h6 26.♗d5 ♖ah8 27.♔f1

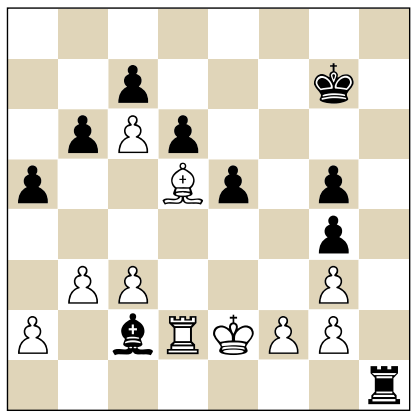
MARIA EMELIANOVA

Ashot Nadanian and Levon Aronian were happy that the audacious idea that they had looked at, finally appeared on the board in the last round.



27...♗c2! This remarkable move allows Black to grab the first rank.

28.♖d2 ♖h1+ 29.♔e2 ♖xe1+ 30.♔xe1 ♖h1+ 31.♔e2



31...♖c1!

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ROTTERDAM, **De Rotterdam,** 15 JANUARY

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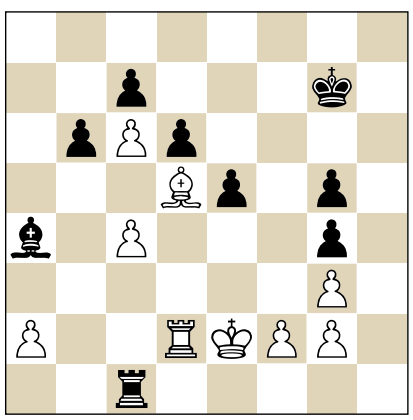
Black's rook and bishop have entered the enemy camp and will soon start threatening White's pawns.

32.c4 a4?! A bit impatient. Black should have played 32...♔f6, activating the king first, since White will be unable to stop the coming ...a5-a4.

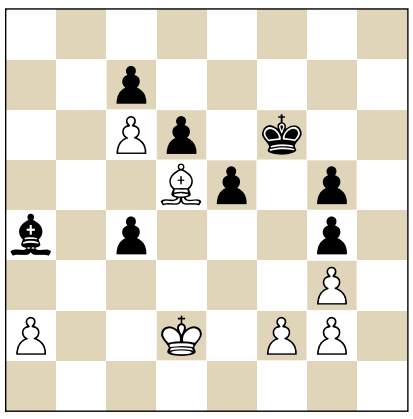
33.bxa4 ♗xa4



34.♖b2! Preventing 34...b5, Inarkiev at the same time underlines the awkward position of Black's bishop on a4.

34...♔f6 35.♔d2 ♖d1+ 36.♔e2 36.♔c3 b5 37.♖b4 seems to be the easiest way to draw.

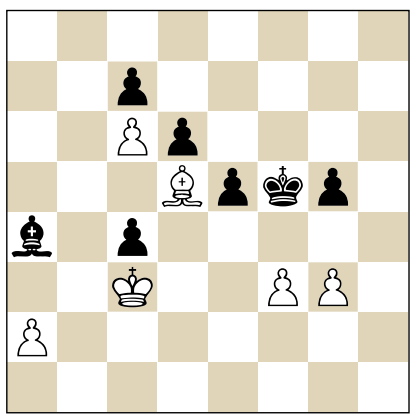
36...♖d4 37.♖d2 b5 38.♔e3 ♖xd2 39.♔xd2 bxc4



40.f3

White should also hold after 40.♔c3 e4 41.♔d4 c3 42.♔xc3 ♔e5 43.♔c4 ♗d1 44.♗f7 ♗e2+ 45.♔b4 d5 46.a4 d4 47.a5 e3 48.fxe3 dxe3 49.♔c3.

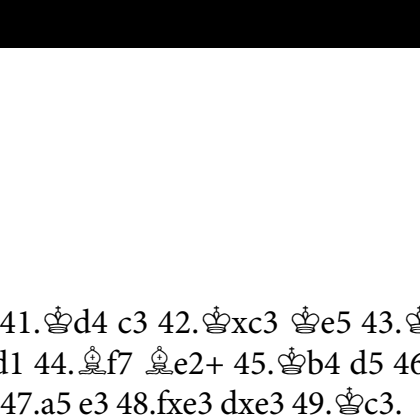
40...♔f5 41.♔c3 gxf3 42.gxf3



42...g4

On the previous move Black exchanged one of his doubled pawns, and now he gets rid of the second one, at the same time creating a passed pawn on the e-file.

43.♗e4+ ♔g5 44.♔xc4



44...♗d1

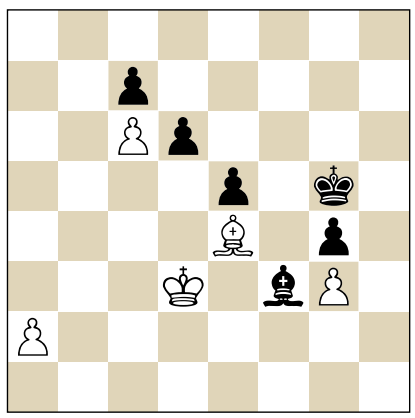
After the immediate 44...gxf3 45.♗xf3, Black will be unable to reach the g3-pawn.

45.♔d3

After 45.fxg4? ♔xg4 46.♔d3 ♔xg3 47.♔e3 ♗a4 Black must win.

45...♗xf3

There is nothing after 45...gxf3 46.♔e3 ♔g4 47.♔f2.



46.a4?

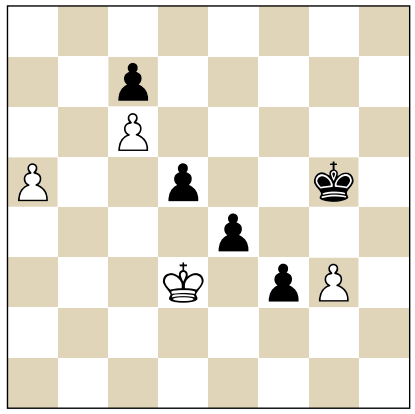
Too optimistic. White should have played 46.♔e3!, when 46...♗d1! is the only move, since otherwise Black could even be worse: 47.♔d2 ♗a4 48.♔c3, and it's almost impossible for Black to make progress, since the pawns on the g-file are preventing his king from invading.

46...d5 47.♗xf3?!

More stubborn was 47.♗h7, although after 47...♔f6 48.a5 ♗g2 49.♔c3 ♔e6 50.a6 d4+ 51.♔c4 ♔d6 52.a7 ♗xc6 53.♔d3 ♗b7 54.♗e4 c6 55.♔c4 ♗a8! 56.♗g2 ♔c7 57.♔c5 ♔b7 58.♗f1 ♔xa7 Black should win.

47...gxf3 48.a5 e4+

Now Black wins easily.



49.♔d2 d4 50.a6 e3+ 51.♔c2 f2 52.a7 f1♕ 53.a8♕ ♕c4+ 54.♔b2 e2 55.♕d8+ ♔g4 56.♕h4+ ♔f3 57.♕f4+ ♔g2 58.♕e4+ ♔g1 59.♕b1+ ♔f2 60.♕f5+ ♔e1 61.♕g6 ♔d1 62.♕g4 ♕c3+ 63.♔a2 ♔c1 64.♕xe2 ♕c2+ 65.♕xc2+ ♔xc2

White resigned. ■

Moscow 2014 — cat. XX

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		TPR
1	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2795	*	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	5½	2971
2	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2760	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	1	4½	2848
3	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2797	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	4	2791
4	Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2759	0	½	½	*	½	1	1	½	4	2796
5	Ding Liren	IGM	CHN	2730	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	3½	2750
6	Peter Leko	IGM	HUN	2731	0	½	½	0	½	*	½	½	2½	2648
7	Alexander Morozevich	IGM	RUS	2724	0	0	½	0	½	½	*	½	2	2593
8	Ernesto Inarkiev	IGM	RUS	2688	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	*	2	2598

Manx for the Memories

After the travesty of Kirsan's sordid re-anointment in Tromsø in August, I retired to my southern Peloponnesian village home to weep quietly and recuperate. Our wonderful neighbour Panayiota brought a constant supply of freshly-baked bread, stuffed courgette flowers, loukoumades and other delicious goodies. Sun, wine and refreshing morning swims soon restored flagging spirits. Thus fortified and ready to reengage the world, I turned, like many an underemployed professional before me, to the events calendar on the FIDE website for ideas on how to fill a neglected and ominously blank diary.

By now I have acquired a distinct reputation as an inveterate globe-trotter. Visiting new countries and experiencing new cultures remains one of life's big pleasures, but getting there, on long-haul flights, in cattle-class, is unpleasant – a feeling which intensifies with each passing year. I was therefore happy to find something closer to home. The PokerStars International, on the Isle of Man, with a relatively healthy 18,000 pounds prize-fund, seemed to fit the bill perfectly. I e-mailed the organiser, Alan Ormsby, immediately.

Of course, I was ridiculously late. Alan informed me that financial conditions had all been allocated months earlier. However, due to my apparent lingering fame within the British Isles, he kindly agreed to contact the sponsor one last time. A few days later, my participation was confirmed.

The first evening saw an unusual combined chess and poker event, in which participants earned extra chips for the subsequent gambling by their skill over the chequered board. Quite a few leading players participated, including Michael Adams, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (MVL) and Laurent Fressinet, not to mention experts who straddle both the disciplines, like Laurent's wife, Almira. Veteran Mark Hebden did very well by making it to the last two before losing out to the more accomplished card player, Baard Dahl. My official excuse for not entering is that I was exercising great self-discipline by saving my energy for the real tournament. The more mundane, and indeed truthful, explanation is that until then I had no interest in, nor any idea how to play poker.

There has not been any international chess on the Isle since the fondly-remembered Monarch Assurance Open of a few years ago. The main section featured a relatively modest entry of 77 participants, which will no doubt increase as the tournament becomes more established.

The early leader was the Frenchman, MVL, who hared off with a Caruanaesque 4/4 (although admittedly against not quite such elite opposition), and was looking in great touch. His compatriot Fressinet found the going a lot tougher. It is not often one sees a 2700+ player begin an Open with three humble draws – although he soon picked up the pace.

As ninth seed, my own ambitions, at least at the start, were very limited. I have played so poorly this year – particularly at the Olympiad when, to my great shame, I badly let down my team – that I just wanted to arrest the rot which has seen me slide outside the Top 100 for the first time in three decades. I focused on simple things, like eating and sleeping properly; getting some fresh air and a little gentle exercise; working systematically, but not excessively; concentrating harder at the board and above all else, not having any distractions. My decision not to stand for re-election as ECF Delegate was an essential component of this. With a permanently clogged inbox and no immediate prospect of removing the incumbents, I have felt my life ebbing away in this role.

My tournament strategy would best be described as 'back to basics', if that expression were not unfortunately associated with an extra-marital affair of the former British Prime Minister, John Major. One cannot always summon good form on demand, but one can avoid total collapses with a modicum of self-discipline.

I began with a relatively modest 3/4 – a touch disappointed that I had let the Dutch teenager Jorden van Foreest off the hook, but consoled by the fact that I had easily outplayed him with Black. In Round 5, I faced the joint British Champion, Jonathan Hawkins, who for

> ‘One cannot always summon good form on demand, but one can avoid total collapses with a modicum of self-discipline.’

just a few more days would remain one of the strongest IMs in the world, before deservedly earning the higher title. Understanding that I needed to kick on if I were to finish among the prize winners I essayed the risky Evans Gambit. Recently I corrupted Surya Ganguly with my Victorian taste in opening theory and he has been quite successful with the Welsh sea captain’s invention – most notably defeating Levon Aronian in Dubai. Alas, I was unable to replicate my colleague’s triumph and after a correctly played game – if that is not an oxymoron for an opening that involves blundering a pawn with 4.b4!? – the struggle ended in a repetition.

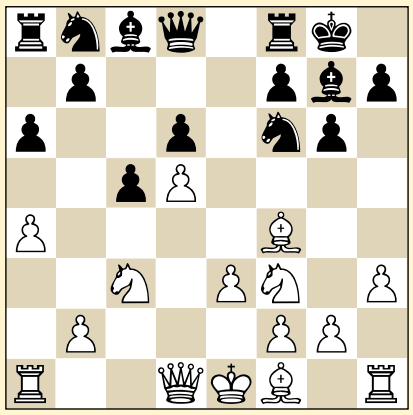
It was not until Round 6 that I found a higher gear. Needing to win with Black against Boruchovsky, I took a few small risks to drag my opponent out of his comfort zone. Later, at the Closing Ceremony, Tiger Hillarp Persson remarked that this was the moment he became convinced I was going to do well in the tournament. It was a perceptive observation and, with hindsight, it was a key turning-point.

After a lapse of a good quarter of a century, I resumed my friendly rivalry with my contemporary, Alon Greenfeld – my 3rd Israeli of the tournament. I obtained a plus in a Closed Sicilian, but failed to strike a decisive blow in mutual time-trouble when my antagonist erred. Reaching a superior endgame, I neglected to push my connected passed pawns until I blundered my kingside and had no other option. With just bishop, knight and two pawns against rook and knight, a draw was on the cards, but wearied by a long defence and harassed by the increment finish, he missed two clear opportunities to rescue himself. When he lost on time, it was already beyond redemption.

There were now four leaders: MVL, David Howell, Gabriel Sargissian and myself. The Frenchman had become becalmed after his blistering start. David was in fine fettle, having downed team-mates Michael Adams and Gawain Jones. He now added another notable scalp when, in a satisfactory middlegame, MVL imploded. I also had a highly satisfactory outing.

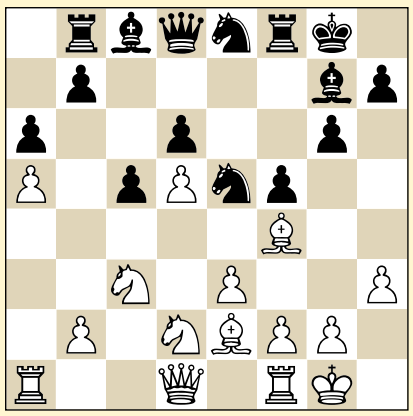
BI 12.11 – A61
Gabriel Sargissian
Nigel Short
Isle of Man 2014 (8)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5
I had been toying with the idea of re-adding the Benoni to my repertoire for a while – not because it is any good, but because I have been becoming too predictable. Excluding a flirtation in the early 1980s, up until this game I had only had the courage to try it against g3 systems. After discussing my intended choice with Matthew Sadler on the morning of the game and receiving his blessing, I decided to give it a punt.
4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♘c3 g6 7.♗f4
If my Internet blitz games are anything to go by, this is perhaps the most popular choice currently. I expected it, if for no other reason than that Aronian also plays it.
7...a6 The wild 7...♗g7 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕b3 b5!? requires rather deeper preparation than I had done for this game.
8.a4 ♗g7 9.h3 0-0 10.e3

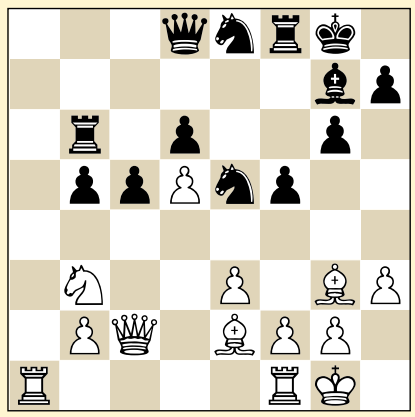


10...♘e8!? When I first started playing this on the Internet, without having a clue what I was doing, I thought it was a novelty. It is, of course, anything but. Since then I have studied the opening, and Vugar Gashimov’s games in particular, and so have slightly more idea about the plans at one’s disposal. The basic idea is to defend the d-pawn.
11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 ♖b8
12...♕e7 is the most popular and scores rather well, but I realised from my blitz experience that there are advantages to not leaving the b6-square unprotected.
13.♘d2 The engines consider that almost any move gives White the advantage, so perhaps it is unsurprising that there is no consensus as to the right plan. White aims for ♘c4.
13...♘e5 14.a5 f5

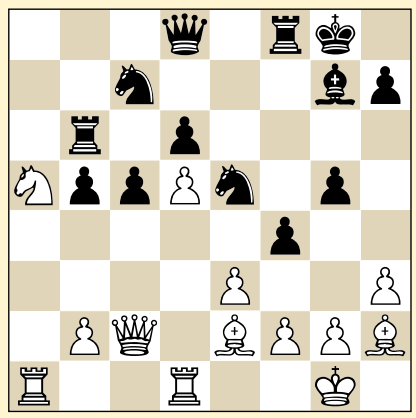
Partly to gain space – but also to give a retreat square to the knight on f7.



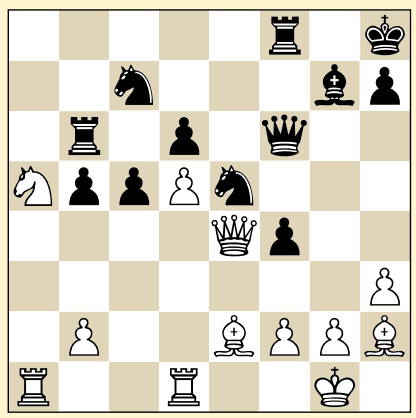
15.♗g3
Giving himself the option of f4.
15...♗d7 16.♕b3?!
I didn't think too much of this move, to be honest, as it seems to lose time.
16...b5 17.axb6 ♖xb6 18.♕c2 ♗b5! Anchoring the bishop on a fine outpost.
19.♘xb5 axb5 After the game Laurent Fressinet surprised me by saying he liked the White position around here. He may be right, but if so, all Benoni players have to give up and try something else: I thought I had achieved certain objectives.
20.♘b3



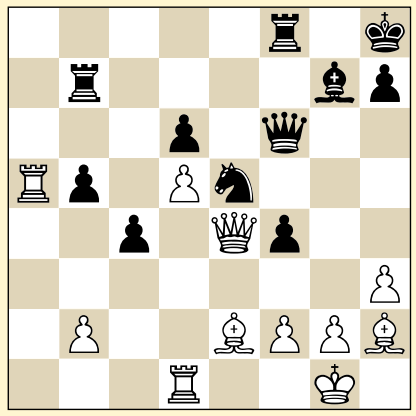
20...g5?! In view of my next comment, this might not be the best as it is somewhat weakening. However, perhaps it won me the game.
21.♘a5? It never even occurred to me that Sargissian would allow his bishop to be interred.
Instead, 21.f4 is critical, but is well met by 21...♘c4! 22.♗xc4 bxc4 23.♕xc4 ♖b4 24.♕c2. I wasn't sure how to follow up here, but 24...♕e7 25.♖ae1 ♘f6 26.fxg5 ♘e4 27.♗f4 ♖fb8 looks pretty decent.
However, 21.♗xe5! ♗xe5 22.♘a5 was the right plan, occupying c6. I probably underestimated this idea. White has an edge.
21...f4 Of course. **22.♗h2 ♘c7 23.♖fd1**



23...♔h8?!
Careless. 23...♕f6! is more precise.
24.♕e4 ♕f6 25.exf4
25.♘c6! ♘xc6 26.♗d3! (exploiting the inaccuracy on move 23) 26...♕h6 27.dxc6 d5 28.♕e7 ♖xc6 29.♖a7 causes great disarray and leaves Black resorting to shots like 29...♕h5! to keep the balance. I saw this at the board and was rather concerned.
25...gxf4



26.♘b3?! I have absolutely no idea what was the point of this move. White goes downhill very rapidly from here on.
26...♘a6 27.♘d2 c4 28.♕b1 ♘c5 The essence of the matter is that White is effectively playing a piece down.
29.♘e4 ♘xe4 30.♕xe4 ♖b7 31.♖a5

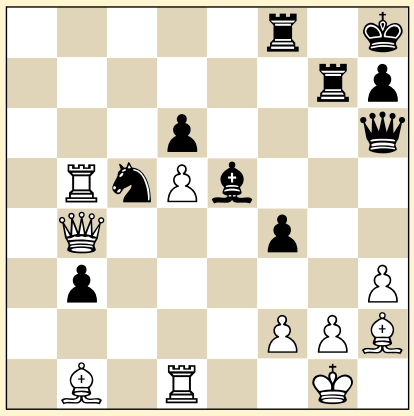


31...♘d7! The knight was superbly placed on e5, but it is heading for an even better outpost.
32.b4 Inventive but inadequate.
32...cxb3 33.♗d3 ♕h6 34.♕b4 ♘c5 35.♗b1 ♗e5 36.♖xb5 ♖g7
The game ends in a brutal attack.

Isle of Man 2014

1	Nigel Short	ENG	2646	7½
2	Laurent Fressinet	FRA	2713	7
3	Sergey Tiviakov	NED	2668	7
4	David Howell	ENG	2657	7
5	Gil Popilski	ISR	2493	7
6	Michael Adams	ENG	2758	7
7	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2757	7
8	Gabriel Sargissian	ARM	2690	7
9	Gawain Jones	ENG	2664	6½
10	Jonathan Hawkins	ENG	2533	6½
11	Alan Merry	ENG	2269	6½
12	Abhijeet Gupta	IND	2640	6½
13	Daniel Fridman	GER	2635	6½
14	Mihail Marin	ROU	2583	6½
15	Tiger Hillarp Persson	SWE	2555	6½
16	Alon Greenfeld	ISR	2542	6½
17	Dronavalli Harika	IND	2528	6½
18	James Tarjan	USA	2525	6½
19	Daniel Gormally	ENG	2488	6
20	Bryan Smith	USA	2482	6
21	Jorden van Foreest	NED	2455	6
22	Alon Mindlin	ISR	2259	6
23	Julio Granda Zuniga	PER	2674	6
24	Mark Hebden	ENG	2540	6

77 players, 9 rounds



37.♗e4 ♘xe4 38.♕xe4 ♕xh3 39.♔h1 ♕h5 White resigned.

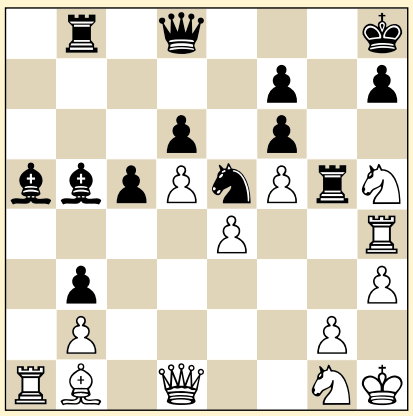
The most rudimentary of calculations revealed that a draw in the last round would almost certainly maximize the amount of money that the two front-runners took home. Indeed that would have been an emotionally satisfying outcome too.

It was the perfect moment for a heart-felt rendition of *Stairway to Heaven*, but for lack of a guitar the tournament winner limited himself to a short speech.

'When I woke up in the morning and found no message, I knew I had no choice: I had to beat him.'

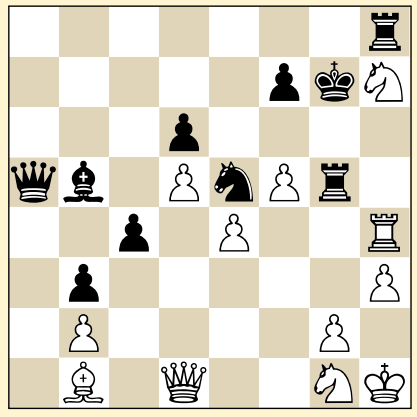
However, I was loathe to contact my younger, testosterone-charged opponent to propose a truce, as this would display weakness and incite him. I therefore waited for him to contact me. When I woke up in the morning and found no message, I knew I had no choice: I had to beat him.

I obtained a promising position in a sharp middlegame, but then foolishly allowed my bishop to be buried when I missed an elementary tactic. Facing strategic asphyxiation, but with reasonable cheapo chances, we reached the following critical position.



Short-Howell
position after 26.♘g1

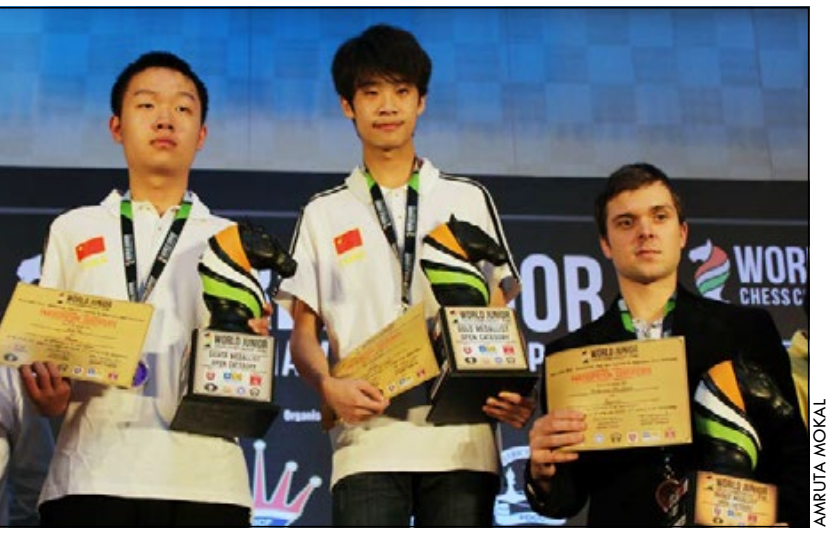
26...c4? A highly desirable advance, were it not for the fact that it loses by force. David appeared agitated and no doubt sensed that his position, although very promising, also contained serious danger. Calculations become shallower in time-trouble, but here one needs great precision.
26...♗b4 was recommended by some commentators, or perhaps I should say engines. It is clearly better than what was played, but it is understandable that a human being would not wish to allow the obvious 27.♖a7! (after 27.♕xb3? ♗e1 28.g3 ♗c4 29.♕e3 ♗xg3 30.♘xg3 ♖b3 is catastrophic) 27...c4 28.♘f3 ♔g8!? 29.♘f4!. White objectively has enough play and has even better practical chances, as the line 29...♗c5? 30.♘e6!, winning, indicates.
Instead, 26...♗b6! preserves all the positional trumps with the tactical point being that 27.♕xb3 fails to the counter-intuitive 27...c4! 28.♕d1 (28.♕xb5 ♗f2) 28...♗xg1!. After 29.♕xg1 ♘f3 30.♕f2 ♘xh4 31.♕xh4 ♕e7, followed by an attack on b2, White will not survive.
27.♖xa5 Obvious and crushing. **27...♕xa5 28.♘xf6 ♔g7 29.♘xh7 ♖h8**



30.♕c1! An important finesse. **30...f6 31.♘xf6!** And now it is all over. **31...♔xf6 32.♖xh8 ♘f7 33.♘f3 ♖g3 34.e5+ dxe5 35.♖h6+ ♔e7 36.♖g6 ♖xf3 37.gxf3 ♕a7 38.♕e1 ♕c5 39.♕h4+ ♔d7 40.♕f6 ♘d8 41.♖g8 ♕g1+** Black resigned.

It was a good tournament, all in all, for the Brits. Teenager Alan Merry, with a modest 2200+ rating, also scored a GM norm. There will be sponsorship at least for another year, which in our opportunity-deprived islands is a cause for celebration. Perhaps, in a few years it might even emulate Gibraltar, if we are lucky. ■

The U-20 World Junior Championship in Pune got a Chinese winner that few had expected. At the end of 13 long rounds, Lu Shanglei (19) edged out 15-year-old prodigy Wei Yi and Russian top-seed Vladimir Fedoseev (19) by half a point. **Jan-Krzysztof Duda** also finished half a point behind the new champion, but the Polish promise had to settle for fourth place. Duda (16) shares his impressions of the tournament and takes a look at the main protagonists, who all may become household names before you know it.



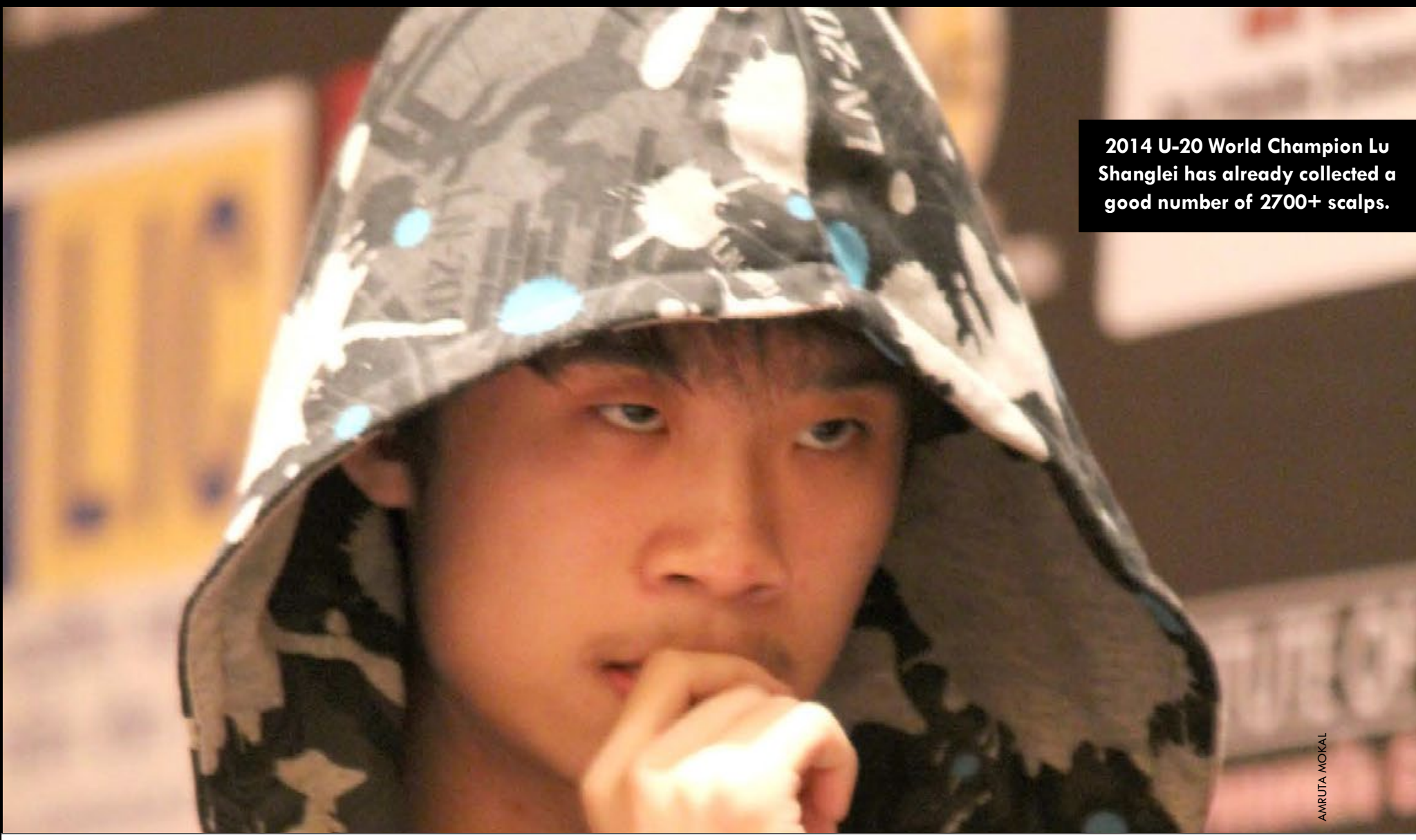
AMRUTA MOKAL

The Top-3 with their colourful trophies. Wei Yi, champion Lu Shanglei and top-seed Vladimir Fedoseev, who finished 3rd.

The Next

Chess is popular in India for two reasons. First of all, India is generally seen as the cradle of the royal game, and secondly, former World Champion Vishy Anand is considered to be one of the leading sportsmen in his country. Therefore Pune, in the state of Maharashtra, a metropolis with some 2.5 million inhabitants, was an apt place to host the U-20 World Chess Championship. The cream of the crop took part, not only because it is a prestigious title, but also because the winner would earn a spot in the 2015 World Cup in Baku.

The tournament consisted of 13 rounds, which allowed for all the leading players to face each other, thus eliminating the risk of accidental results. In addition to the foreign favourites, there was quite a big number of local players, whose ratings were often undeservedly low and their scores therefore often surprisingly high. Inspired by the familiar surroundings, the Indian players were given wings and their strong performances contributed to the general high level. As in other sports, the overall differences in strength have become smaller in chess, too. Thanks to the easy access to information there are no 'tourists' anymore, and it's getting more and more difficult to win even against the theoretically weaker players. In response to this development, the younger generation has created a new style of play which they believe is the correct solution to the problem. Every 'tiki-taka' ends at some point. Modern chess isn't only about perfect opening preparation and finding manoeuvres that are – objectively speaking – the best in a given position. These days, there's no time for this and the most important facet is perhaps their practical approach. Strong players choose rare openings and simple variations in which chances may be equal, but which require self-reliant play. One might call it 'the syndrome of having faith in one's own brain power' ☺. I guess this tendency started with Carlsen himself, who is notorious for his original openings even at the highest level.



2014 U-20 World Champion Lu Shanglei has already collected a good number of 2700+ scalps.

AMRUTA MOKAL

Generation

Another important facet is the creation of threats and problems that objectively speaking may not be entirely correct, but which are often hard to solve because of a shortage of time. Tartakower's dictum that 'the threat is often stronger than its execution' still seems accurate. All these factors, combined with effective line-counting, can be found in the many talented players we have at the moment.

Junior chess continues to gravitate towards Asia, more specifically to China and India. No fewer than seven players from the top-10 came from these two countries, and China claimed both the gold and silver medals. However, the gold was not won by Wei Yi, who was a member of the Chinese team that won gold at the Tromsø Olympiad, but by Lu Shanglei. The new champion was seeded 13th and seems to share his lucky number with Garry Kasparov. The rest of the world was represented by Vladimir Fedoseev, the highest-rated participant (2661), and two former Junior World Champions (in younger categories), the writer of these lines and my compatriot Kamil Dragun.

This new Chinese success gives us something to reflect on. If you take the first two places in such a tough and difficult tournament, the gold medal cannot be called an accident. Although I am not absolutely sure that this is the defining factor, I feel that a crucial element in their successes is the Chinese 'work model', based on the mutual improvement of skills, the free exchange of information and the focus on group achievements rather than individual ones. As we also saw at the Olympiad, the leading players are willing to work together and share their knowledge with each other.

'A crucial element in their successes is the Chinese "work model", based on the mutual improvement of skills.'

The U-20 World Championship opens the door to a world of serious chess competitions. It's a kind of summary of a junior's career. Winning a medal (especially the gold one) is an 'accolade', a rite-of-passage, if you will, for a chess player. Junior World Champions go down in history and the majority of them remain among the best players in the further stages of their careers. The best ones usually already have high ratings, and this time it was no different. All the medal winners are already recognized as strong players, and I am sure we are going to hear a lot more about them in the future. Let me say a few words about the top-finishers, who obviously all have the potential to become top players!

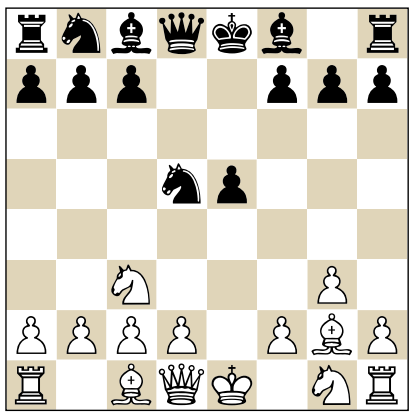
The play of the new champion, Lu Shanglei, is based on his great skill in recognizing tactical nuances. He often scores points from slightly but clearly worse positions. I don't know of any junior players who have won so many games against 2700+ players, both in classical chess and with faster time-controls. With black he plays openings that are strategically risky. With white he chooses less common variations after 1.e4. He often sets traps that his (tired) opponents walk into. I think he will soon have a 2600+ rating.

Vladimir Fedoseev is a highly energetic and confident young man who also likes sharp chess. His great strength is creating attacks and developing initiatives. He believes in his tactical prowess and usually plays openings in which theory doesn't mean much. He is vulnerable in defence and in some endgames in which knowledge is important.

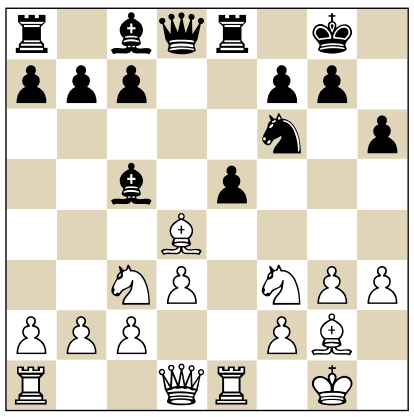
The encounter between Shanglei and Fedoseev in Pune was to some extent decisive in the fight for first place. It was remarkable how swiftly the Chinese player floored his opponent.

VG 1.9 – C26
Lu Shanglei
Vladimir Fedoseev
Pune 2014 (10)

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3!? The move that had been prepared for Vladimir. **2...♘f6 3.g3 d5 4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♗g2**



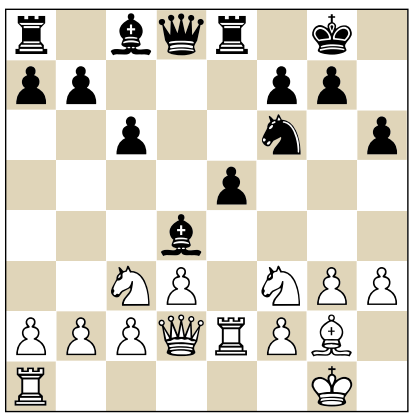
5...♘f6!?
Not a popular choice nowadays. Much more common is 5...♘xc3, as in Mamedyarov-Kramnik.
6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0.♗c5 8.d3 0-0 9.h3 ♖e8 10.♖e1 h6 11.♗e3 ♘d4 12.♗xd4!? With better developed pieces, Lu is going for exchanges. He could also have gone 12.♘d2, when the position is more flexible, but far from troublesome for Black.



12...♗xd4
It's possible that after 12...exd4!? the Russian was worried about the pawn on d4, but analysis shows that Black

is OK: 13.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 14.♘e2 ♕d8 15.♕d2 c6 16.♕f4?! ♕b6! 17.b3 ♘d5 18.♕h4 ♗f5! and Black looks a bit better, because the pawn on d4 is taboo: 19.♘exd4?? ♗e7! 20.♕h5 ♗g6 21.♕e5 ♗f6, winning.

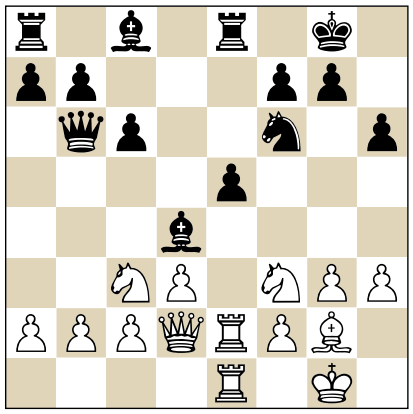
13.♕d2 c6 14.♖e2



14...♕b6? And even in this desert some tactic is working! Black would be fine after 14...♗f5 15.♖ae1 ♕d6.

15.♖ae1!

Now Black has many problems with the defence of the pawn on e5.



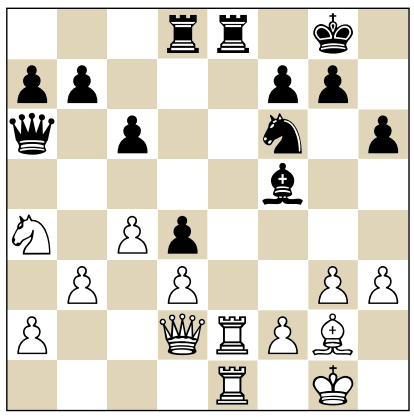
15...♗f5 This loses at least a pawn, but it's already hard to find a constructive defence, as ♘a4 and b3 will work everywhere, e.g. 15...♗d7 16.♘a4 ♕a6 17.b3 b5 18.♘xd4 exd4 19.♘c5 ♖xe2 20.♖xe2 ♕c8 21.♘xd7!? ♕xd7 22.♕b4, and, with his many weakness, Black will lose material.

16.♘a4 ♕b5 Black will also have problems after 16...♕a6 17.♘xd4 exd4 18.♕b4, or 16...♕d8 17.♘xe5.

17.b3

And Black loses a pawn. The rest is elementary.

17...♖ad8 18.c4 ♕a6 19.♘xd4 exd4? More stubborn was 19...♖xd4 20.♖xe5 ♖xe5 21.♖xe5 ♗g6 22.♕e1!?, when White is a pawn up, with better coordinated pieces.

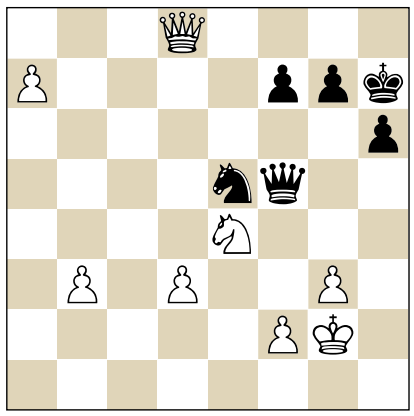


20.♖e5! Maybe the top-seed of the championship had missed this attack on the bishop combined with the threat of ♖a5. The game is over.

20...b5 21.cxb5 ♕c8 22.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 24.bxc6 ♗xh3 25.♗xh3 ♕xh3 26.♕a5 ♕e6 27.♕xa7 ♕xc6 28.♕xd4

White is two healthy pawns up.

28...♘f6 29.♘c5 ♕c8 30.a4 ♕h3 31.♘e4 ♘d7 32.a5 ♕f5 33.a6 ♘e5 34.♕d8+ ♔h7 35.a7 ♘f3+ 36.♔g2 ♘e5



37.♘f6+! An elegant finish to an easy-looking win! Black resigned.

Like all Chinese players, Wei Yi calculates with outstanding skill, but his moves also evince a deep strategic understanding. He makes moves that strengthen his position. He is also quite good in openings. He always prepares some specific (and healthy!) lines for his opponent, which he has carefully checked with his computer and which pose unpleasant problems. I'm not sure about his endgame play, because his games are usually over before they reach this phase. Why that is, you can glean from the following game.

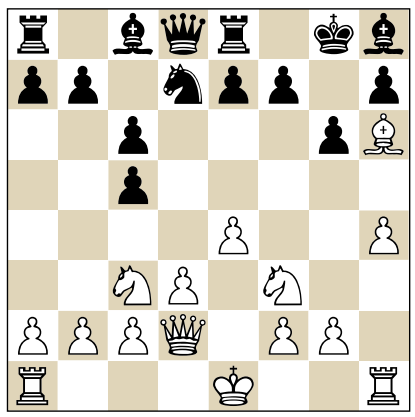
AMRUTA MOKAL

Vladimir Fedoseev (2661). 'A highly energetic and confident young man, who likes sharp chess.'

SI 31.7 – B31
Wei Yi
AL Muthaiah
Pune 2014 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.h3 ♗g7 6.d3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♗e3 ♘d7 9.♕d2 ♖e8 10.♗h6 ♗h8 11.h4!?

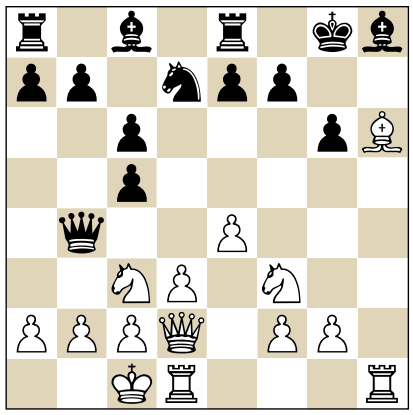
Wei is exploiting the fact that Black cannot stop the h-pawn.



11...♕a5 12.h5 ♕b4?!

Black is wasting time, while White is developing his pieces.

13.hxg6 hxg6 14.0-0-0



14...♗xc3

When you say A, you should say B... This is probably the losing mistake, but even after other moves Black's position should collapse, since he is lagging in development and his king is more exposed.

15.bxc3

15.♕xc3 was definitely safer, but also much less attractive!

15...♕a3+ 16.♔b1 ♘b6

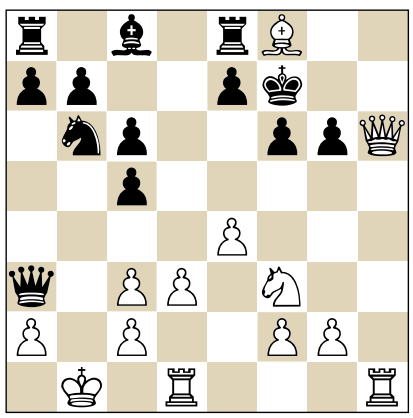
For the first time Black is threatening something, but White is much quicker.

17.♗f8 f6 18.♕h6

Here, after 18.♖h8+ ♔f7 19.♘g5+ fxg5 20.♕xg5, it's mate in 10 moves ☺. But it's not easy to play this, since a human being tries to calculate everything accurately.

18...♔f7

The only move.



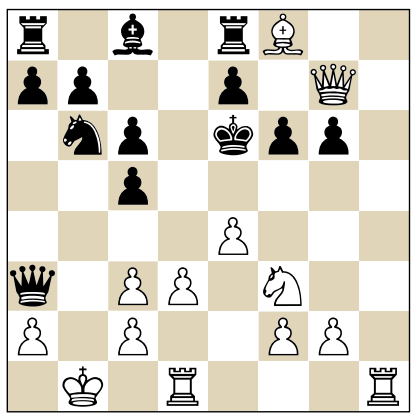
19.♕g7+?

But this is the first big mistake. The king in the centre is not a bigger target! The winning method was 19.♘g5+ fxg5 20.♕xg5!, similar to what Wei will play later.

19...♔e6

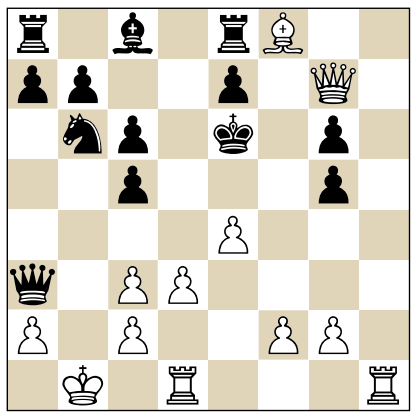
Chinese coach Li Wenliang could not have been more pleased. What more could he have hoped for than gold for Lu Shenliang and silver for Wei Yi?

AMRUTA MOKAL

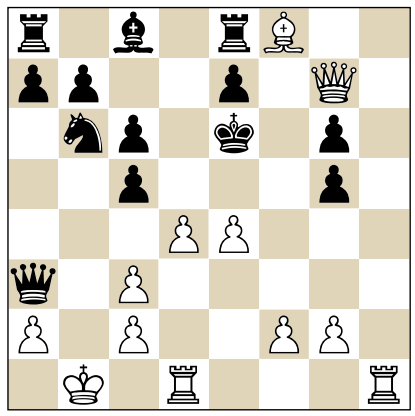


20.♘g5+! Maybe Wei was tempted by 20.♖h7, but this won't yield him anything, according to both the comp and myself, while I was watching the game ☺: 20...♘a4! 21.♕xe7+ ♖xe7 22.♖xe7+ ♔d6 23.♖xb7+ (not necessary, but two pawns are two pawns) 23...♔e6 24.♖e7+ ♔d6 25.♖xa7+ ♔e6 26.♖e7+ ♔d6, and White should go for a perpetual, since 27.e5+? won't work: 27...fxe5 28.♖f7+ ♔e6 (28...♔d5?? is mate after 29.c4+ ♔e6 30.♘g5) 29.♘g5+ ♔d5 30.c4+ ♔d4 31.♖f4+ ♔c3! and the king escapes, as I had seen.

20...fxg5



21.d4? But this is not as good as it looks. The computer suggests 21.♕xg6+ ♔d7 22.♗xe7!! (it may look as if White is giving too much material, but look at the bishop on c8, and the rook on a8) 22...♖xe7 23.e5 c4 24.dxc4+ ♔c7 25.♕d6+ ♕xd6 26.exd6+ ♔d8 27.dxe7+ ♔xe7 28.♖h7+ ♔e6 29.c5 ♘d5 30.♔b2, and White should win. But you have to find 22.♗xe7. Easy when you are sitting at the computer and drinking water. But this is a game in progress!



21...c4!

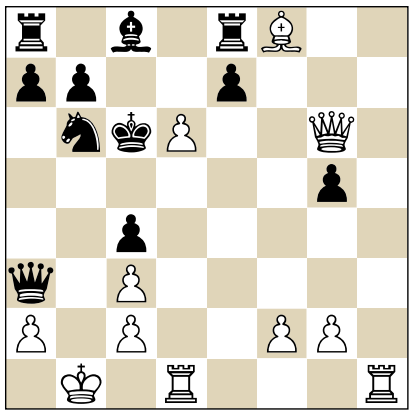
A very good decision by the Indian player. Equally good was 21...♘c4, which I had calculated as follows: 22.♕g8+ ♔d7 23.dxc5+ ♔c7 24.♕xc4 ♖xf8 25.♖h7 ♖e8! 26.♕d4 b6 27.♕e5+ ♔b7 28.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 29.♕xe7+ ♔a6, and the king escapes.

22.d5+ It makes sense to open as many lines as possible.

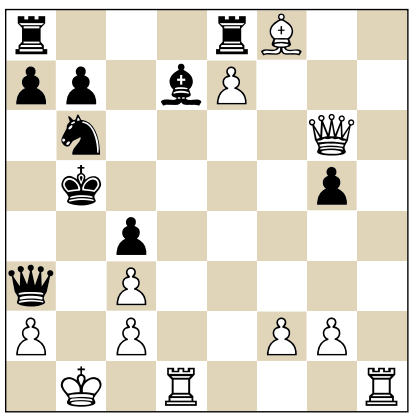
22...cxd5 23.exd5+ ♔d7

Because of the threat 24...♘a4 White's position is inferior.

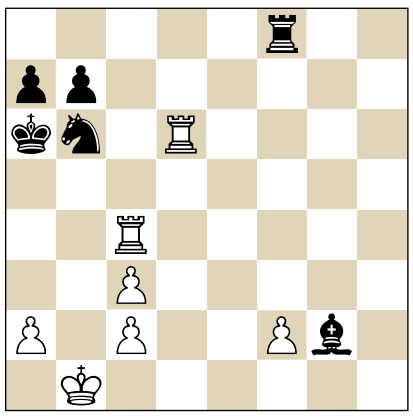
24.d6 ♔c6!
The only move, but a simple one.
25.♕xg6
25.dxe7 ♗f5 26.g4 ♗xg4 isn't much better for White, since ...♘a4 is still dangerous.



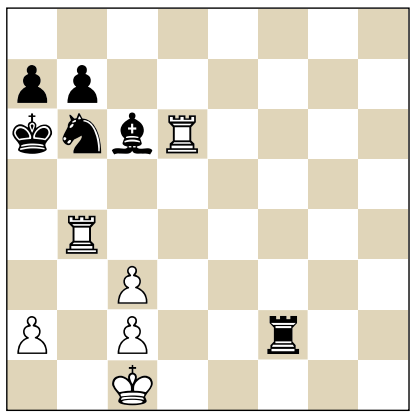
25...♗d7? Not bad at all, but Black could win with the fantastic 25...♗f5! 26.♕xf5 ♘a4. The point! White is helpless, e.g. 27.♕d5+ ♔b6 28.♕d4+ ♔a5 29.♕d5+ b5, and wins.
26.dxe7+ ♔b5



27.♖h5
This move forces a queen swap, which should favour Black. But what to play?
27...♗c6 28.♕xg5+ ♔a6 29.♕c5 ♕xc5 30.♖xc5 ♗xg2 31.♖d6 ♖xf8 32.exf8♕ ♖xf8 33.♖xc4



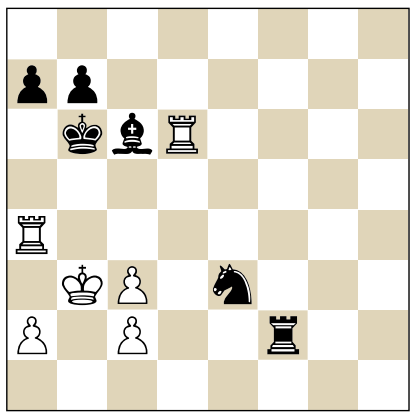
And this endgame, which Black should have won smoothly, he lost!! It's true that the stronger player has all the luck ☺.
33...♖xf2 34.♖b4 ♗c6 35.♔c1



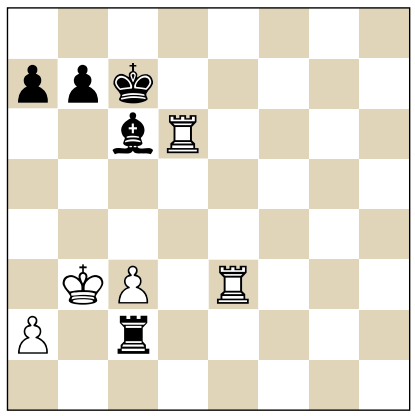
35...♘d5! 36.♖a4+ ♔b6 37.♔b2 ♘e3
Instead, 37...♔c5! wins instantly.

> 'I'm not sure about Wei Yi's endgame play, because his games are usually over before they reach this phase.'

38.♔b3



38...♖xc2?? 39.♖e4
39.♖e6!? ♖d2!? was an interesting idea, to catch the white king!!: 40.♖b4+ ♔c5 41.♖xe3 b5!! 42.♔a3 a5 43.♖b2 b4+ 44.cxb4+ axb4+ 45.♖xb4 ♖xa2+ 46.♔xa2 ♔xb4, and it's a dead draw.
39...♔c7 40.♖xe3



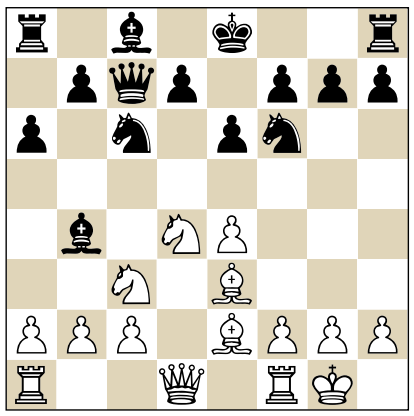
40...♖h2?
40...♗a4+! would have drawn immediately! Or 40...♖xc3+. Now Black has big chances for a draw, but White presses, and Wei finally won the game. Unfortunately, the rest of the moves are missing.

As for myself, I'd rather not assess my skills, especially my strengths or weaknesses. It wouldn't be objective. I can say that my goal is to get to a 2750-2800 rating. To achieve this, strictly organized work is required. You need to be a fighter, ambitious and energetic. Being in good physical shape is essential, and among many other things even luck is needed. You need to have the support of the people around you, your family, coaches and friends. For example, my home town Wieliczka, world famous for its Salt Mine, sponsored my individual lessons in school, which allowed me to play in more events. I try to work on chess almost every day, at least for two to three hours, usually with my coach, grandmaster Kamil Miton. I also understand that chess is not just a board and pieces, so I dedicate a lot of my time to physical exercise. Twice a week I run about 10 kilometres, with thanks to Mr. Miroslaw Wacek (the physiologist of the famous Polish tennis sisters Radwanska). I swim twice a week as well, and from time to time I play tennis. So I will try my best, but I know that big success is determined by many factors!

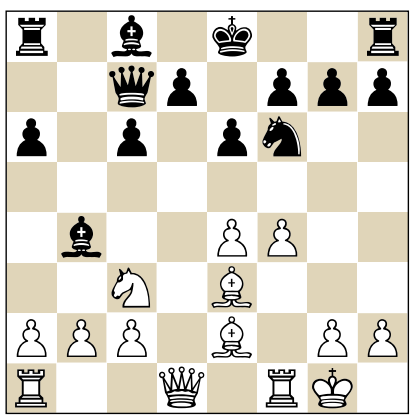
Here's what I considered my best effort in Pune.

SI 40.16 – B49
Jan-Krzysztof Duda
Jorge Cori
Pune 2014 (12)

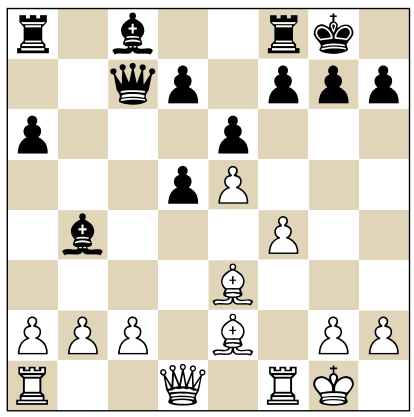
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e2 a6 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♗b4



9.♘xc6!?
For the readers this move may come as a surprise, but I had played it twice already. White is attacking instantly. The main line is of course 9.♘a4, which I played against Cori at the last Olympiad: 9...♗e7 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♘b6 ♖b8 12.♘xc8 ♕xc8 13.♗d4 c5 14.♗e5 ♖b6 15.♕d3!? (avoiding 15.b3 ♘xe4, which Jorge had played earlier) 15...d6 16.♗c3 0-0 17.b3 d5 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♗e5 ♗f6 20.♗xf6 ♘xf6 21.♖ad1 ♕c7, and here I may improve on the game with 22.♕d2!? although it remains unclear if White has got anything out of the opening.
9...bxc6 10.f4



10...0-0!?
As I had expected, Cori didn't want to go for my lines. Obviously, 10...♗xc3!? is critical, but if you don't play accurately, you may end up in trouble: 11.bxc3 ♘xe4, and here White has a wide choice: 12.♗f3!? (as I played against Wieczorek in the Polish Championship), 12.♗d3!? or 12.♕d4!?, in each case with sharp, untheoretical play.
11.e5 I also considered 11.♕d3, but I wasn't sure what to do after 11...d5!?, e.g. 12.e5 ♘d7 13.♘a4 c5 14.c4 ♗b7, with unclear play.
11...♘d5 Neither of us calculated 11...♗xc3? as there is no doubt that after 12.bxc3 ♘d5 13.♗c5! ♘xc3 14.♕d3 ♘xe2+ 15.♕xe2 ♖e8 16.c4 White has a winning position because of his much better bishop.
12.♘xd5 cxd5



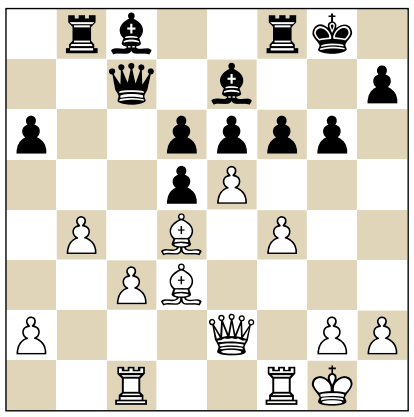
13.c3 My main idea was to restrict my opponent's pieces. I thought I should play c3, ♗d4 and b4, when Black will be unable to exchange any bishop. Generally in this position, Black's main task is to get rid of White's light-squared bishop, so White should prevent this.
13...♗e7 13...♗c5?! is not good here, because White will obtain a favourable French type of position, with an extra pawn on the queenside after 14.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 15.♕d4.
14.♖c1
Best. White keeps some flexibility and will play b4, or c4, at some point.
14...♖b8 14...a5 15.c4! was my idea, when ...a5 is a wasted tempo.
15.b4
White is slightly better. He only has to watch out for ...f6 or ... d6 breaks.
15...d6 16.♗d3 g6 16...f5! is the computer's suggestion, and I agree.

Pune 2014

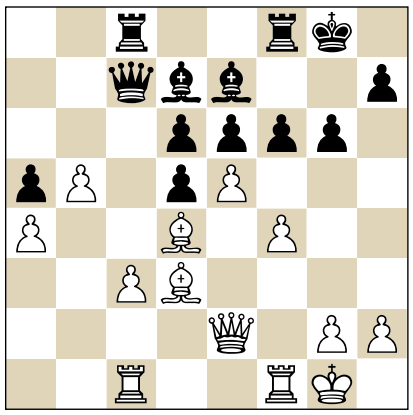
1	**Lu Shanglei**	IGM	CHN	2533	**10**
2	**Wei Yi**	IGM	CHN	2641	**9½**
3	**Vladimir Fedoseev**	IGM	RUS	2661	**9½**
4	**Jan-Krzysztof Duda**	IGM	POL	2599	**9½**
5	**Santosh Gujrathi Vidit**	IGM	IND	2635	**9**
6	**Kamil Dragun**	IGM	POL	2546	**9**
7	**Srinath Narayanan**	IM	IND	2443	**9**
8	**Murali Karthikeyan**	IM	IND	2499	**9**
9	**Diptayan Ghosh**	IM	IND	2508	**8½**
10	**Bai Jinshi**	IM	CHN	2406	**8½**
11	**Benjamin Bok**	IGM	NED	2591	**8½**
12	**Tadeas Kriebel**	IM	CZE	2428	**8½**
13	**Robin van Kampen**	IGM	NED	2641	**8½**
14	**Ulvi Bajarani**	IGM	AZE	2496	**8½**
15	**Balazs Csonka**	FM	HUN	2409	**8½**
16	**Jorge Cori**	IGM	PER	2612	**8**
17	**Karen Grigoryan**	IGM	ARM	2591	**8**
18	**Aryan Tari**	IM	NOR	2450	**8**
19	**Grigoriy Oparin**	IGM	RUS	2552	**8**
20	**Vladislav Kovalev**	IGM	BLR	2548	**8**
21	**Mikhail Antipov**	IGM	RUS	2524	**8**
22	**Quinten Ducarmon**	IM	NED	2487	**8**
23	**Aleksandar Indjic**	IGM	SRB	2554	**8**
24	**Nijat Abasov**	IGM	AZE	2528	**8**

136 players, 13 rounds

17.♗d4 f6 18.♕e2



18...a5?!
I didn't like this move. Black saves the pawn, but gives me a passed pawn on b5. I would have sacrificed the pawn on a6 to open the a-file.
19.b5 ♗d7 20.a4
I spent 20 minutes on this move, since I had to calculate deeply. After 20.c4?! dxe5! 21.cxd5 (21.fxe5 ♗c5!) 21...♕b7! 22.fxe5 ♕xd5 White is slightly better, but the game has become sharper.
20...♖bc8

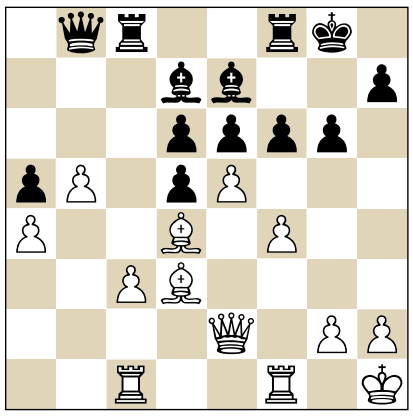


21.♔h1!?

I was very proud of this move. The computer suggests 21.b6 ♕b8, but I didn't even calculate this move, since it opens up the diagonal for Black's light-squared bishop.

21...♕b8

White would have a winning position after 21...fxe5 22.fxe5 dxe5? 23.b6! ♕d6 24.♕xe5 ♕xe5 25.♗xe5.

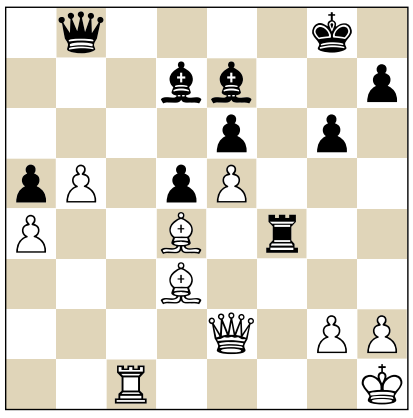


22.c4?!

Stronger was the preparatory 22.♕e3!, particularly given Cori's time problems.

22...dxc4 23.♗xc4 fxe5 24.fxe5 d5 25.♗d3 ♖xc1 26.♖xc1 ♖f4!

This one had escaped my attention. I am still better, but the game gets sharper.



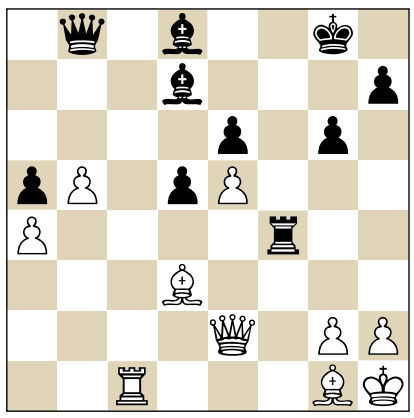
AMRUTA MOKAL

Our reporter Jan-Krzysztof Duda has a clear view of modern chess: Every 'tiki-taka' ends at some point.

27.♗g1!? Objectively not the best, but very practical. White forces Black to take a decision.

27...♗d8?

After 27...♖xa4 28.b6 (after 28.♕c2 I had seen 28...♗g5!) 28...♖b4 29.♖c7 I thought White was winning, but Black somehow stays alive after 29...♕e8! 30.♕c2 ♗d8 31.♖b7 ♗c6 32.♖b8 d4!.



28.♗c5! A fantastic move. White activates his last piece. The end is near.

28...♗c7 29.♖e1!

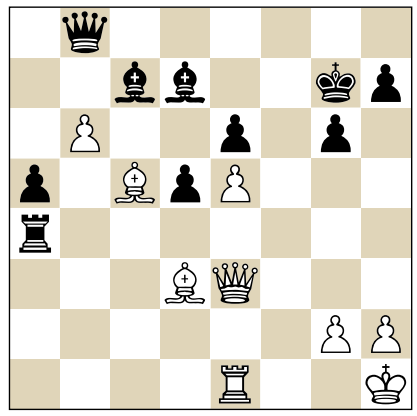
It's very important to keep the e5-pawn alive. Black is in big trouble, and time is ticking away...

29...♔g7?!

After 29...♖xa4 I would have had to see 30.♕f2!! and I would win: 30...♕e8 31.b6 ♗b8 32.♕f6!.

30.♕e3! Winning. **30...♖xa4?!**

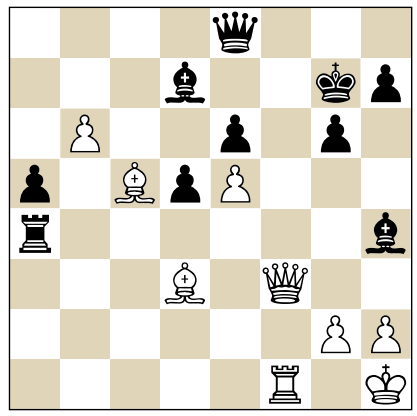
Not good, but Black's position is also hopeless after 30...♖f7 31.b6 ♗d8 32.♖f1!. **31.b6**



31...♗d8

His last chance was 31...♗xb6!? 32.♗xb6 ♗b5! but 33.♕c5 ♗xd3 34.♕e7+ ♔h8 35.♕f6+ ♔g8 36.♕xe6+ ♔h8 37.♕f6+ ♔g8 38.♗d8! is crushing.

32.♖f1 ♗h4 33.♕f3 ♕e8

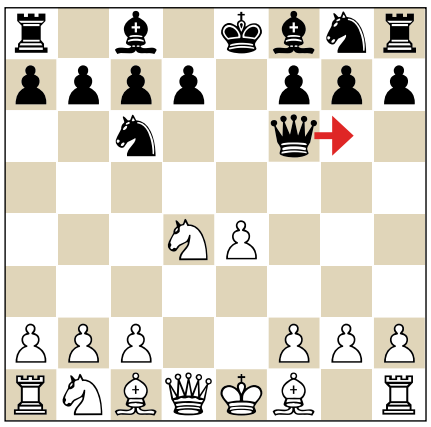


34.b7!?

An easier win was 34.♕f8+, but after this move Black also resigned. The little pawn will become an angel of death. ■

Rocking the Scotch

Jeroen Bosch



4...♕f6

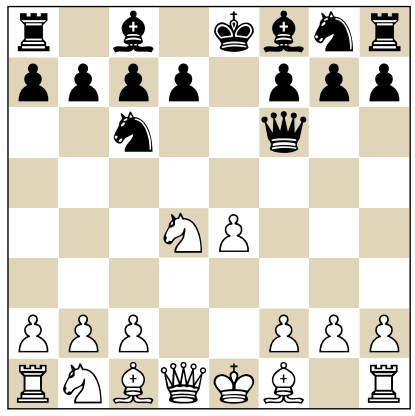
'What is more, Magnus Carlsen had already played in the same way in the Dubai World Rapid, beating Yu Yangyi.'

In the Tromsø Olympiad, Laurent Fressinet used an interesting move order weapon with clear SOS tendencies versus the Scotch: bringing out the queen on move 4, developing the king's bishop to d6 in front of the d-pawn, and taking on h2 with that same bishop on move 8! What is more, Magnus Carlsen had already played in the same way in the Dubai World Rapid, beating Yu Yangyi. More than enough reason to take a closer look!

Bazar Khatanbaatar
Laurent Fressinet
Tromsø Olympiad 2014

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♕f6!?

A good choice by Fressinet. Rather than play 4...♘f6 or 4...♗c5, which are arguably the main options versus the Scotch, the Frenchman embarks on a queen outing on move 4. In their huge tome on the Scotch (Everyman: 2011, 380 pages!) the respectable theoreticians Yelena Dembo and Richard Palliser deal with this move in a small note, wondering why anyone would want to play it. They correctly point out that in most cases play will transpose to the 4...♗c5 line, only avoiding the 4...♗c5 5.♘b3 line. However, that is exactly the point of this clever move order weapon! (And one made much earlier by theoretical luminaries like Estrin and Panov.) Naturally, in an ancient opening like the Scotch, the queen move has been known for a long time (and there are close to 1500 games in the database with this move). Please note that 4...♗c5 5.♘b3!? ♗b6 6.♘c3, followed by ♕e2 and the plan of queenside castling, has been played by Magnus Carlsen and many other strong players to great effect. See SOS-13 (New In Chess, 2011) for an article on this line. This is the line that Fressinet is avoiding with his present move order.

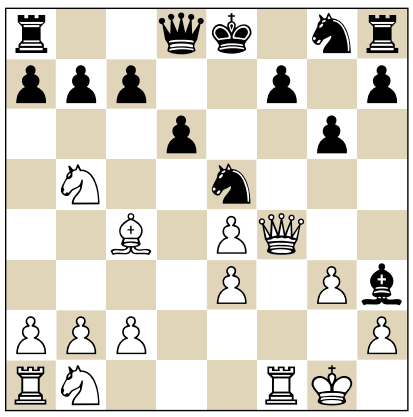


5.♘b3

This is the subject of this SOS, and one way to give a distinct flavour to 4...♕f6. However, it is also precisely against this move that Black's 4...♕f6 works really well. Of course, we need to have a brief look at the alternatives:

■ Simply a good move is 5.♗e3, when Black has no choice but to transpose to a 4...♗c5 main line with 5...♗c5 6.c3 ♘ge7, and Black is doing OK by today's standards, but you should study some main line theory!

As Black you need to know about the tricky Blumenfeld Attack 6.♘b5. I wrote on this line in NIC 2003/7 and it also appeared in SOS-3. Since then it has become quite popular, with hundreds and hundreds of games played. Checking the database it is obvious that not all Black players kept up with developments, so I will briefly repeat here what I consider to be the best line for Black (as published in SOS-4): 6...♗xe3 7.fxe3 ♕h4+! (this check is vital) 8.g3 ♕d8 9.♕g4 g6! 10.♕f4 d6 11.♗c4 ♘e5 12.0-0 ♗h3!; the star move, made possible by the check on move 7 (12...♕e7 13.♘1c3 c6 14.♗xf7+! was played previously and just loses for Black).



13.♗xf7+ ♔d7, and although it may seem odd, Black is better, as 14.♘1c3 g5! is awkward to meet. This was first played in Wang Hao-Harikrishna, Tiayuan 2005. It won Black the SOS Prize for best novelty.

■ Likewise, the game transposes to well-known lines from the 4...♗c5 variation after 5.♘xc6 ♗c5, when 6.♕d2 (6.♕f3 is the 'cunning' modern alternative, when 6...bxc6 has turned out to be the most decent reply) 6...dxc6 has been doing fine for Black recently.

■ An attempt at refutation is 5.♘b5!?, when after 5...♗c5 6.♕e2, I would recommend you to study Hector's games with 6...♕d8!?, which looks stronger than the more popular 6...♗b6 7.♘1c3 ♘ge7. White may go for a tiny edge with 6.♕d2!? ♗b6 7.♘1c3 ♘ge7, playing for an endgame with 8.♕f4 ♕xf4 9.♗xf4 d6 10.♗e3.

■ 5.c3 ♗c5 again transposes, after 6.♗e3.

■ Finally 5.♘f3 is best met by Parma's suggestion of 5...♗b4+! 6.c3 ♗c5, when Black is completely fine.

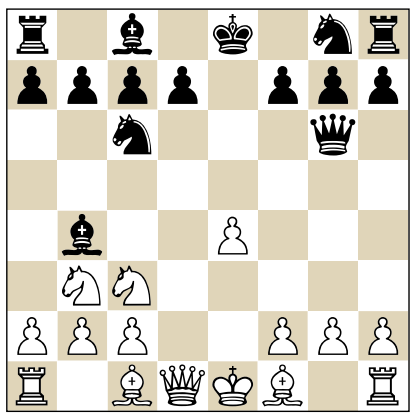
5...♕g6

Clearly the best move. Black is attacking the king's pawn, preparing ...♘f6 and exploiting the fact that White has no good natural move to protect the pawn. (If it were not for the pawn on g2 White would like to play 6.♗d3.)

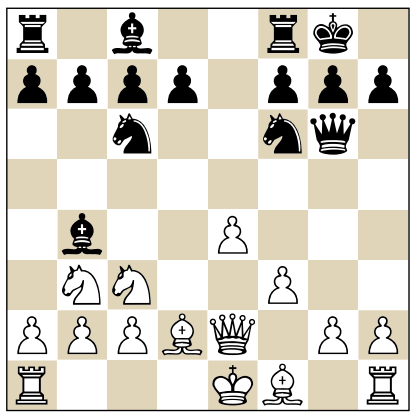
6.f3

White acknowledges that other moves have drawbacks, too, and immediately makes the protecting move he may be forced to make in the future anyway. The disadvantage is that it weakens the dark squares.

■ The natural move is 6.♘c3, when Black re-introduces the threat with 6...♗b4.



Now, after 7.♗d2, Black should take some care and not allow himself to be tempted by the pawn: 7...♘f6 (7...♗xc3?! 8.♗xc3 ♕xe4+ 9.♗e2, and White had dangerous compensation in Van der Wiel-Van de Oudeweetering, Amsterdam 2005) 8.f3 0-0 9.♕e2, and in the two games in which this position occurred Black did well:



– 9...a5 10.a3 (10.♘b5 d5!? 11.♘xc7 dxe4, and Black has a dangerous initiative) 10...♗d6 11.♘b5? a4 12.♘c1 ♗xh2! is the same trick as in the main game! Tello Nunez-Pilgaard, Valencia 2001.

– 9...♗xc3 10.♗xc3 d5 11.e5 ♖e8 12.0-0-0 was unclear in Kim-T.Ponomariov, Voronezh 2006.

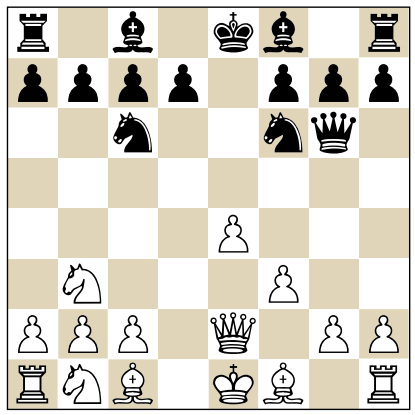
– but 9...♖e8!, intending 10...d5, is actually the strongest move.

After 7.f3 recent games have seen Black using this option to fracture White's pawns: 7...♗xc3+ (7...♘f6 is a decent alternative) 8.bxc3, and now:

– 8...♘ge7 9.♕d2 0-0 10.♘d4 a6 11.♗d3 d6 12.0-0 ♕h5 13.♖f2 f5?! 14.♖b1 ♖b8 15.♕e2 ♘e5 16.f4 ♕xe2 17.♖xe2 (17.♗xe2ì) 17...♘xd3 18.cxd3 fxe4 19.♖xe4 ♔f7 was equal in S.Novikov-Matlakov, St Petersburg 2005.

– 8...d6 9.♗e3 (9.♘d4!) 9...f5 10.exf5 ♗xf5 11.♖c1 ♘ge7 12.♕d2 0-0-0, with a Black edge in Wagner Michel-C.Flear, Novi Sad 1990.

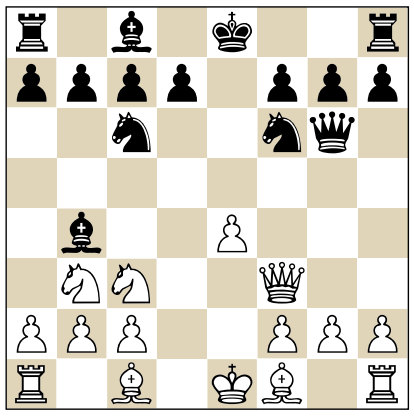
■ The other main move besides 6.f3 is 6.♕e2, but after 6...♘f6 White usually plays 7.f3 anyway (7.e5?! ♘d5 8.f4?! d6!? 9.exd6+ ♗e6 10.♘c3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xd6 clearly favoured Black in Berkovich-Lein, Moscow 1973. And after 7.♗f4!? ♗b4+! 8.c3 ♗e7 9.♘1d2 d5! Black was also better in Slibar-Mikac, Slovenia 1994).



7...♗b4+ (this check 'in the air' is a recurring theme. Actually, just as in the main game, 7...♗d6 is quite strong here, too!) 8.c3 ♗e7 9.c4 0-0 10.♘c3 ♖e8 11.♗e3 ♗b4! 12.♖c1, and in this comfortable position for Black Hector continued in his very own style with

12...b5!? 13.cxb5 ♘e5 14.a3 ♗xc3+ 15.♖xc3 d5! 16.f4 ♘xe4 17.fxe5 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♖xe5 19.♕d2 ♗h3! 20.♔f2 ♖ae8 21.♗f4 ♖e2+!, and Black won in Laveryd-Hector, Sweden 1998/99.

■ Black obtains good play after 6.♕f3 ♘f6 7.♘1d2?! ♗e7! 8.♗b5 0-0, when Black has played only natural moves, while White's position looks artificial; Garcia Padron-Tseshkovsky, Las Palmas 1976. If White plays 7.♘c3, then Black will go 7...♗b4, increasing the pressure on e4, and now:



– 8.♗d2 0-0, and White can more or less equalize with 9.♗d3.

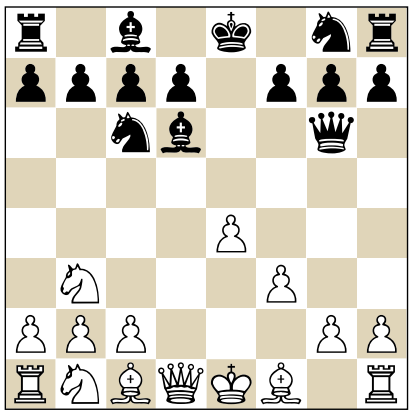
– 8.♗d3, Moskovic-Cox, Newport Pagnell rapid 2010, when Black was fine after 8...♘e5, but even better was 8...d5!. Now 9.exd5 ♘e5! favours Black, mainly because 10.♕e2 fails to 10...♕xg2! 11.♕xe5+ ♔d8, when the rook is hanging and ...♖e8 is an equally big threat.

■ A bad move is 6.♗e2?, when after 6...♕xg2 White has insufficient compensation. (Note that taking the e-pawn is wrong after 6...♕xe4 7.0-0, and White has a serious lead in development.)

6...♗d6!

This odd-looking bishop move (obstructing the development of his queenside) is actually best. White has to decide whether Black is really going to take on h2!

Ivanchuk played our familiar check, which can't be all that bad either: 6...♗b4+ 7.♗d2, but after 7...a5?! 8.♘c3 ♘ge7? (8...♗d6! 9.♘b5!) 9.♘b5! ♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 was very awkward for Black in Nepomniachtchi-Ivanchuk, Beijing rapid 2013.

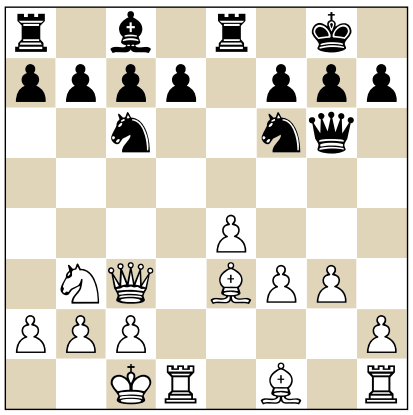


7.♘c3

The most logical move, as it prevents 7...♗xh2 by tactical means.

Worse is 7.g4?! h5! 8.g5 f6! 9.♕d2 (9.gxf6 ♕xf6!) 9...♘ge7 10.♘c3 ♗b4 11.♗d3 d6 12.♖g1 f5 (12...♘e5) 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 fxe4 15.fxe4 (15.♗xe4 ♗f5 is also much better for Black) 15...♗g4 favours Black, Grimberg-Erdös, Deizisau 2013.

With 7.g3 White also protects his h-pawn, but Black just continues normally with 7...♘f6 8.♘c3 ♗e5 9.♗e3 0-0! (White has good compensation for the two pawns after 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘xe4 11.♗d3 ♘xc3 12.♕d2 ♕f6 13.0-0) 10.♕d2 ♗xc3 (10...♖e8) 11.♕xc3 ♖e8 12.0-0-0



12...♘xe4! (now this is strong) 13.fxe4 ♕xe4 14.♗h6 gxh6 15.♗d3, Stenner-Kololli, Germany 2013, and now 15...♘b4! would have been the best way to prove that Black is better.

7...♘ge7

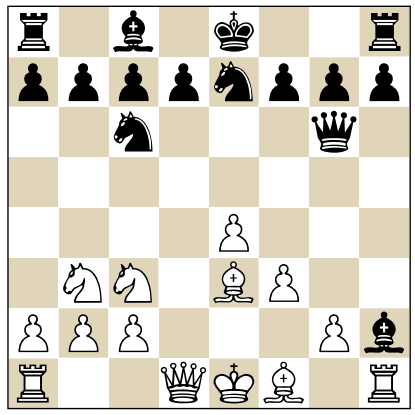
Bad is 7...♗xh2? 8.♖xh2! ♕g3+ 9.♔e2 ♕xh2 10.♘d5, and White has excellent compensation. The text develops and re-introduces the threat to White's h-pawn.

8.♗e3

A logical move, continuing to develop. In the recent World Junior, 8.g4 was played to prevent Black from taking on h2. Black should be alright, though: 8...♗e5 (8...h5!? 9.g5 f6 is the same approach as against 7.g4 and it looks OK) 9.♗e3 ♗xc3+ (9...h5!?) 10.bxc3 d6 (10...h5!?) 11.♘d4 a6 12.♕d2 ♘e5 13.♗e2 ♗d7 14.0-0-0 ♗b5!? 15.♘f5 (15.♘xb5 axb5 16.♗xb5+ ♘7c6 is sharp 17.f4!?) 15...f6, and in this tense position Black was still no worse; Vishnu-Pujari, Pune 2014.

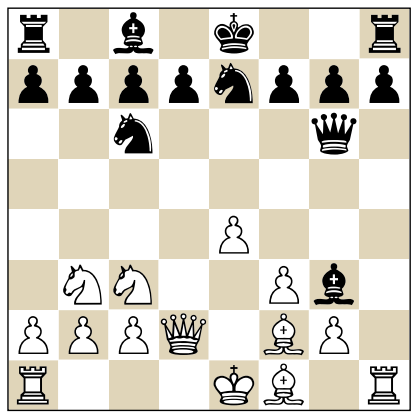
8...♗xh2!

Wow, Black just grabs the pawn and gets away with it, too! A sign of the modern (engine-influenced) chess times. Chess has become very concrete, and if no refutation is in sight, you go for the material. Of course Fressinet knew about Carlsen's game in the World Rapid.



9.♘e2?!

White is protecting the g3-square, but it looks a little odd nevertheless. Previously White had played 9.♕d2 ♗g3+ 10.♗f2

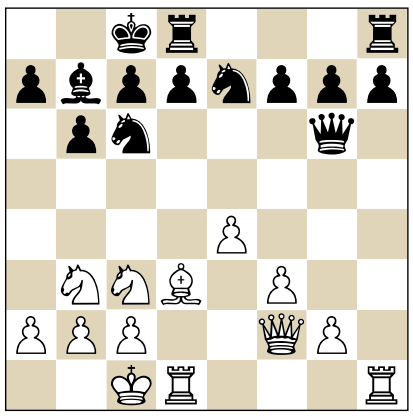


and now:

– 10...a6 11.0-0-0 ♗xf2 12.♕xf2 d6

13.f4 ♗g4 14.♖e1 0-0-0, and White was struggling to prove compensation for the pawn; Hedjazian-Aurel, Montigny le Bretonneux 2006. However, 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.exd5 would have been awkward for Black. His extra pawn is not a factor yet, and he is behind in development with his king in the centre.

– Magnus rightly aimed for developing his queenside as fast as possible. The right strategy, as c7 is protected anyway, so ♘b5 is not a threat. 10...b6 11.0-0-0 ♗xf2 12.♕xf2 ♗b7 13.♗d3 0-0-0



and with both sides equal in development, Black is a sound pawn up. As I remember from watching it on the live transmission, Magnus made the conversion look really easy, but it wouldn't hurt us mortal souls to play through the remaining moves on our databases to see how such things are done, see Yu Yangyi-Carlsen, Dubai rapid 2014.

By the way, with square d5 protected, sacrificing the exchange on h2 will not work: 9.♖xh2? ♕g3+ 10.♗f2 ♕xh2, and White has not enough compensation after say 11.♕d2 0-0 12.0-0-0 a6!?.

9...♗g3+

A slightly surprising move (that is, in comparison to moves 6 and 8) that is perhaps not the most accurate way to proceed. Why give up the bishop when it does not seem necessary?

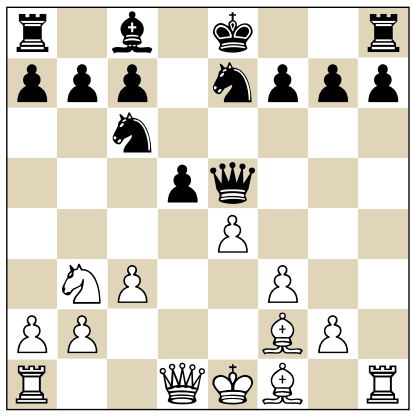
Instead, 9...♗e5 is the first move that springs to mind. Maybe Fressinet was afraid that after 10.c3 his lack of space would tell?

Or, and this is more likely, he had seen his 12th move well in advance and judged that he would be very pleasantly placed there.

10.♘xg3 ♕xg3+ 11.♗f2 ♕e5

The queen takes up a commanding position in the centre and prepares ...d5.

12.c3 d5!

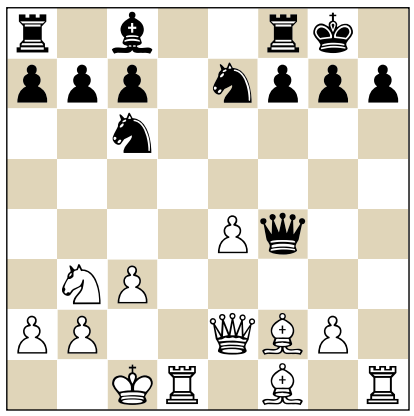


I think this is why Fressinet did not mind giving up his bishop on move 9. Black damages his opponent's structure and frees his queenside bishop.

13.♕e2 dxe4 14.fxe4 0-0

Black is completely safe here, and has a clear edge with his extra pawn.

15.0-0-0 ♕f4+ There are other moves here, too, but the check places White in a psychological quandary: do you really want to allow a queen swap when you are a pawn down?



16.♗e3

Like it or not 16.♕d2 was more stubborn, but extremely unpleasant after 16...♕xd2+ 17.♖xd2 ♘e5.

16...♕xe4

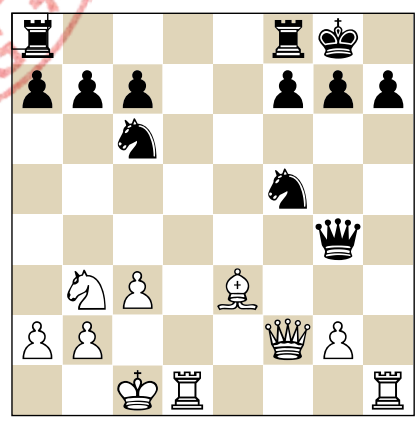
Now Black is up another pawn.

17.♕f2 ♗f5!

The threat of ...♕b1+ forces a further trade of pieces.

18.♗d3 ♕g4 19.♗xf5 ♘xf5

Black has consolidated and is simply two pawns up. The remaining moves are less interesting for our purpose.



20.♗f4 ♖fe8 21.♖he1 ♘d6 22.g3

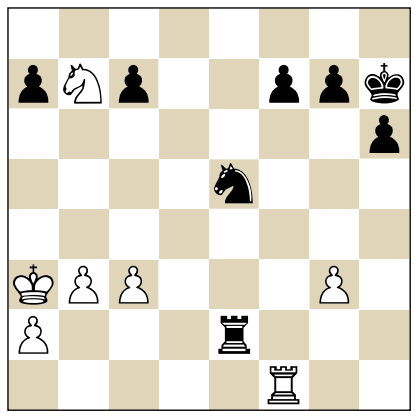
White cannot retrieve a pawn, as 22.♗xd6 cxd6 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖xd6 fails to 24...♖e2, with an easy win.

22...♖xe1 23.♖xe1 h6 24.♘c5 ♕g6 Keeping the knight under attack with 24...♕f5 was even more precise.

25.♕f3 ♖d8 26.b3 ♕f6 27.♔b2 ♔h7 A bit slow, perhaps Fressinet was low on time here.

27...g5! 28.♕g4 b6! (28...♘b5 is how the engines would like to win, but it involves some unnecessary tactics), and in view of his hanging pieces White has to allow the queen swap after 29.♘d7 ♕f5, with an easy win.

28.♕e2?! ♕f5! 29.♗xd6 ♖xd6 30.♘xb7 ♖e6 31.♕f1 ♕xf1 32.♖xf1 ♖e2+ 33.♔a3 ♘e5



White has managed to retrieve one pawn, but he is still lost.

34.♘d8 ♔g6 35.♖f4 ♖e3 36.♖a4 ♖xg3 37.♖xa7 ♖xc3 And now things have become really simple.

38.♔b2 ♖d3 39.♘b7 h5 40.♘c5 ♖d5 41.b4 h4 42.♖xc7 h3 43.♖c8 h2 44.♖h8 ♘c4+ And here White resigned in view of 45...♖h5. ■

NEW IN CHESS TRAINING

Grand Prix gets under way amid confusion and discontent

Let there be no misunderstanding, the Grand Prix is a great idea and, if properly executed, it would be a perfect part of the World Championship cycle. But even if you're utterly convinced of the good intentions of everyone involved, it is still impossible not to be critical of the new 2014-15 cycle.

Just imagine you are a leading grandmaster, a professional whose income and status depends on invitations to prestigious tournaments and successes in the world championship cycle. If you qualified or may receive an invitation, the Grand Prix will be a big thing for you. But it can also be a burden if you have to wait till the last moment for the dates to be announced and you cannot accept any invitations for the months during which the GP may take place. This time, the players were left guessing till about one month before the first GP. And even then they were left with more than one uncertainty. They hardly had time to be shocked by the fact that this formerly stable source of income had suddenly become half as interesting, as the prize-fund had been cut in half. A bigger concern were the first two tournaments that were played back to back and therefore demanded a lot from the players that took part in both.

Or was the third tournament, scheduled for February 2015 in Tehran, Iran, an even greater headache? Clearly, Boris Gelfand, as an Israeli citizen, could not even contemplate going there, but the

For many months the 2014-15 FIDE Grand Prix remained shrouded in mystery. Only when the FIDE presidential elections had guaranteed Kirsan Ilyumzhinov a further term, were the participants informed about the dates and additional details. Instead of six GPs, the new cycle will consist of only four. The prize-fund was slashed by 50 per cent. Nor was it ideal that the first two legs, with eight of the GMs taking part in both, were played with only a five-day interval. We bring you annotated games by Fabiano Caruana and Boris Gelfand, the winners of the inaugural GP in Baku, and Dmitry Andreikin, the victor in Tashkent.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Guess who took home the winner's cheque after the Baku Grand Prix? Shared winners Boris Gelfand and Fabiano Caruana do not seem to be entirely sure how they are going to share the spoils, a total of $35,000.

same held true for Hikaru Nakamura. Americans are discouraged from travelling to Iran, but it is not forbidden. On the other hand, no American insurance company will cover you when you go there.

And so the schedule had to be revised. Participants only have to play three of the four GPs (but contrary to the previous cycle all three are counted for the final GP standings), which allowed those who could not go to Tehran to skip that leg (leaving aside the question of what kind of organization would plan a tournament in a country that not all your members can safely travel to). An understandable decision, which unfortunately proved unnecessary when the third leg was suddenly moved from Tehran to Tbilisi, Georgia.

But the changes had been made and you cannot keep shuffling players back and forth endlessly – which meant that Boris Gelfand not only played two GPs in a row, but that he then immediately had to travel to Moscow for the Petrosian Memorial. For a 'classical' player like Gelfand, the idea of three tournaments on the trot must be horror. Yet, he accepted this schedule with remarkable equanimity, probably thinking of the months last year when he got no invitations at all.

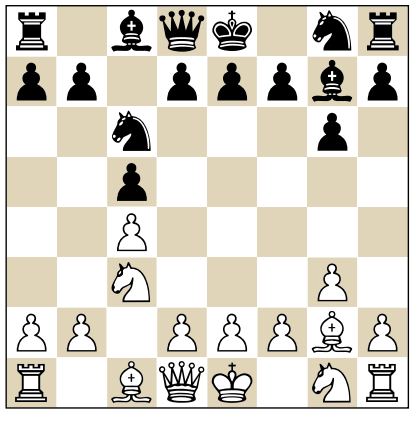
Funnily enough, the redistribution of players could also have a positive effect. Peter Svidler had no wish to play in Tehran either, but his protest came too late, as others had lodged their complaints faster. This turned out very well for him when Tehran was substituted by Tbilisi and he could happily be part of the third leg, as he was spared the prospect of two GPs in a row. (Another substitution caused less annoyance. Moscow was originally announced as the venue for the fourth leg, and for most players this was a more attractive destination than Khanty-Mansiysk, where the tournament was finally moved to.)

The unfortunate closeness of the first two legs didn't fail to have its effect. What to think of Boris Gelfand, who finished shared first in Baku and then had to settle for last place in Tashkent? Or the man who is most often named as Magnus Carlsen's next challenger, Fabiano Caruana? How were his interests protected? Following his fabulous results in St. Louis and the European Club Cup in Bilbao, the world's number two had one week to get ready for Baku and then five days to prepare for Tashkent. In Baku he tied for first despite two losses, but in Tashkent he struggled and finished fifth. The tweet that he sent out to the world after he had won his last-round game said it all: 'Good to finish on a win, and very glad to be done with this nightmare. Hopefully, FIDE can organize their WC cycle a bit better next time.' (DJtG)

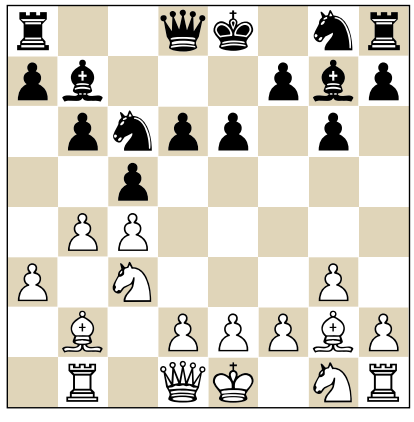
NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

EO 31.1 – A36
Leinier Dominguez
Fabiano Caruana
Baku 2014 (10)

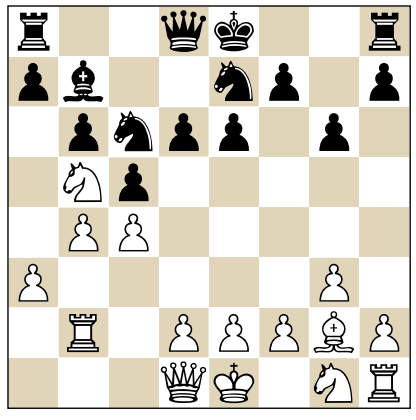
1.c4 c5 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.♘c3 ♘c6



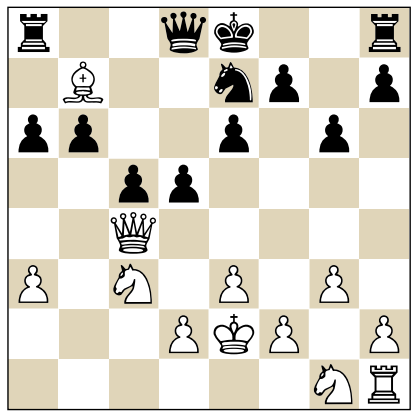
5.♖b1 A rare move which I wasn't too familiar with.
5...b6 6.a3 ♗b7 7.b4 d6 8.♗b2 e6
Possibly not very accurate. I wanted the knight to go to e7 rather than f6, but it was probably better to delay this decision with 8...♕d7.



9.♘b5
Leinier wanted to trade bishops and achieve d4, but it turns out he probably can't and would be better off developing his kingside and getting castled.
I was expecting something like 9.♘f3 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0, with a roughly equal situation.
9...♗xb2 10.♖xb2 ♘ge7



11.e3?
This is a clear mistake. White weakens the d3-square and will struggle to develop afterward.
11.d4 a6 doesn't work for White.
11.♘h3 was a sensible way to proceed, in which case the position is about equal.
11.h4!? was my main concern, but after 11...0-0 12.h5 ♘f5 Black has nothing to fear.
11...0-0
I spent a lot of time considering 11...a6 12.♘c3 ♘xb4 13.♗xb7 ♘d3+ 14.♔e2 ♘xb2 15.♕b3 ♘xc4 16.♕xc4 d5

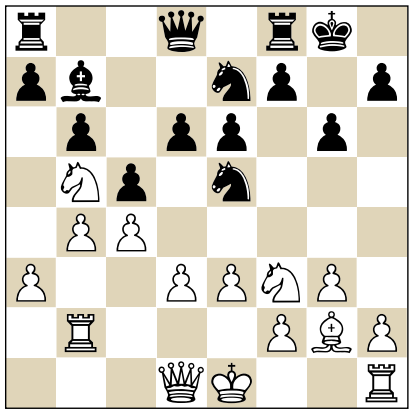


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

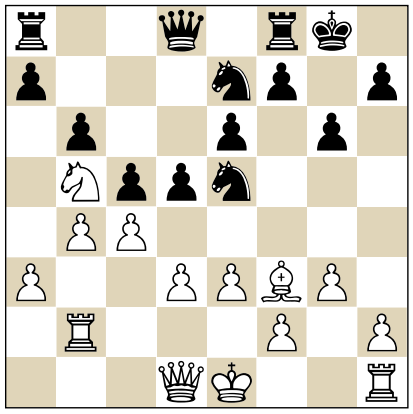
17.♕a4+ (I rejected the line because of 17.♕d3 ♖a7 18.♗xa6, but after 18...0-0 Black has an advantage) 17...b5 18.♘xb5 axb5 19.♕xa8 ♕xa8 20.♗xa8 ♔d7, and Black regains the piece, with a slight advantage because of the weakness of a3.
12.♘f3
12.♘e2? ♘xb4 just loses material now.
12.d3 d5 is also unpleasant for White but may have been the lesser evil.
12...♘e5 13.d3

MARIA EMELIANOVA

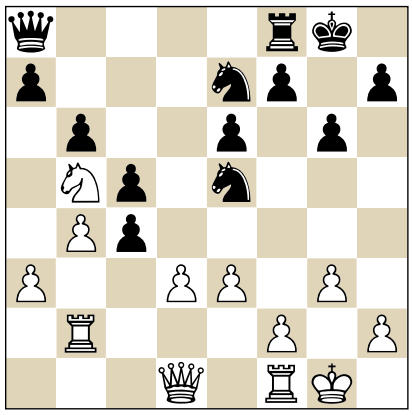
Baku, one of the chess capitals of the world. In 2015 the city will host the FIDE World Cup, in 2016 the Olympiad.



13...♗xf3!
It's a bit counterintuitive to give up this bishop, but I needed to achieve ...d5 and maintain my knight on e5.
14.♗xf3 d5
I think it was only at this point Leinier realized how critical his situation is.



15.♗e2 Very ugly, but the best defensive chance.
Bad was 15.0-0 dxc4! 16.♗xa8 ♕xa8,



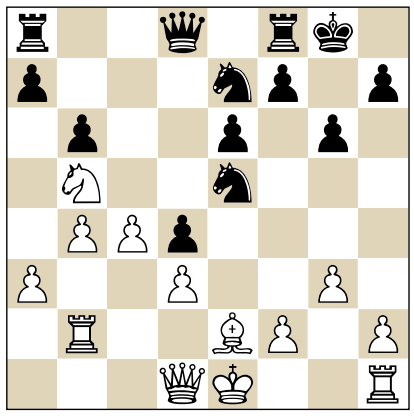
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and the knight will settle on f3 or d3, with devastating effect.
While 15.cxd5 ♘xd5 leaves the knight on b5 short of squares: 16.0-0 a6 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♘c3 d4, and now White's centre collapses.
15...d4

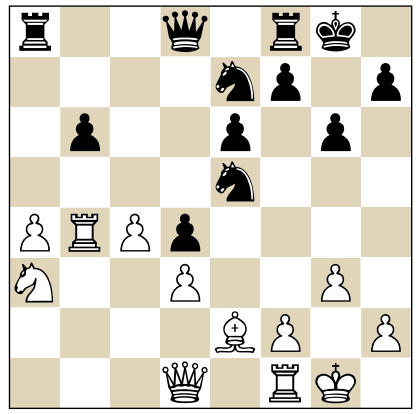
MARIA EMELIANOVA

Fabiano Caruana found it hard to enjoy two GPs in one month. 'Glad to be done with this nightmare. Hopefully FIDE can organize their WC cycle a bit better next time.'

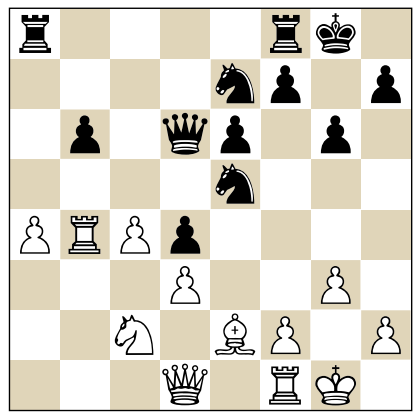
It was also possible to try 15...a6 16.♘c3 d4, but after 17.♘e4 I didn't see a way to continue, although Black has a certain advantage.
16.exd4 cxd4



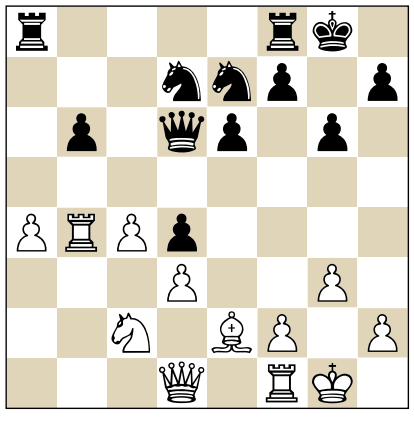
17.a4
The only way to save White's knight.
17...a6 18.♘a3 a5
But now I will win the c5-square and reach a very good Benoni.
19.0-0 19.♘b5!, preventing ... ♕d6, seems like the best defence: 19...axb4 20.♖xb4, and because the d4-pawn is under pressure I will find it difficult to re-route my knight to the desirable c5-square.
19...axb4 20.♖xb4



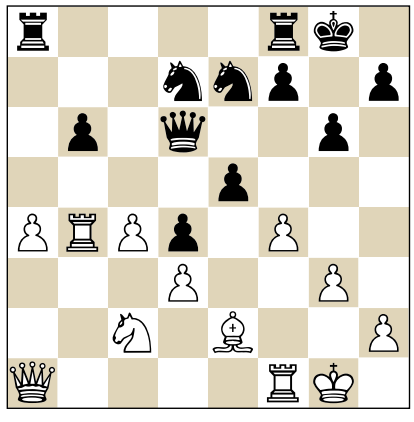
20...♕d6! A very awkward move for White, which my opponent may have underestimated.
21.♘c2
21.♕b3 was a stronger defence, but after 21...♘d7 or 21...♖a6, I nevertheless keep a clear edge.



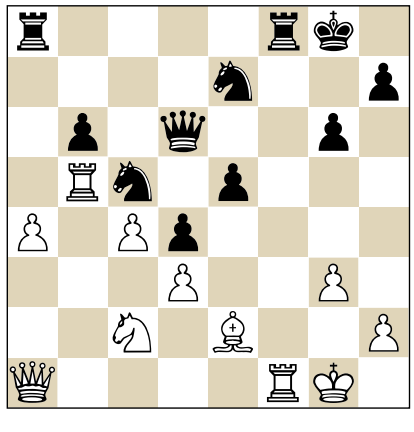
21...♘d7
If I put my knight on c5 and consolidate, the game will be nearly over. Leinier correctly plays for quick counterplay:



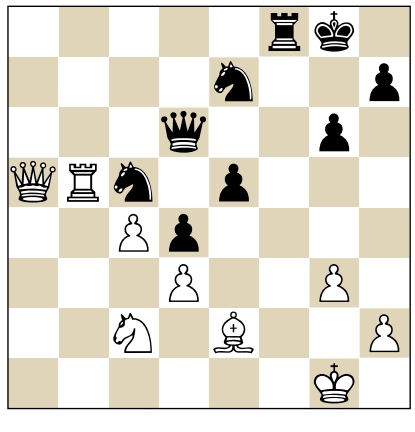
22.♕a1 e5 23.f4
This was a difficult moment, because my first impulse was to play for a direct refutation with 23...♘c6 or 23...♘c5, but after a while I realized it was more important to maintain my e5-d4 structure than look for a tactical solution.



23...f6! A good patient decision – my best move of the game.
24.♖b5 ♘c5 25.fxe5 fxe5



26.♖xf8+?
The decisive mistake. He had to play 26.a5 ♖xa5 27.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 28.♖xa5 bxa5 29.♕xa5 e4, and now after 30.♘e1 I assumed I would have a large advantage after 30...e3, but White is solid and retains chances for a successful defence.
26...♖xf8
Now the rook on f8 will be able to participate in the decisive attack.
27.a5 bxa5 28.♕xa5



28...♘c6!

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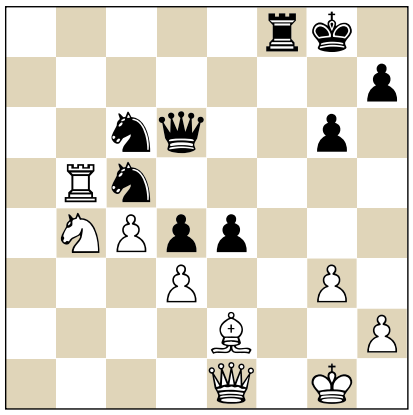
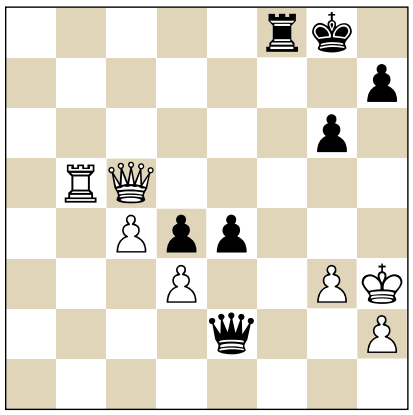
UT DALLAS

The winning move, and what I imagine Leinier overlooked.
28...♕f6? 29.♕e1 leads nowhere.
29.♕e1
29.♕a3? ♕f6 and next ...♕f2+ is unstoppable.
29...e4
This breakthrough finishes the game. White is simply getting steamrolled in the centre.
30.♘b4



30...♘e5
Easiest – including the second knight in the attack.
30...♘xb4 31.♕xb4 ♕f6 was my first intention, but then I realized that 32.♕xc5! ♕f2+ 33.♔h1 ♕e1+ 34.♔g2 ♕xe2+ 35.♔h3



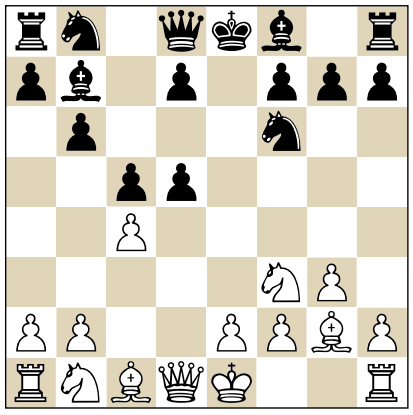
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

is surprisingly not all that clear. White is not getting mated, and although Black should win, I wanted something more clear-cut.
31.dxe4 d3 32.♗d1 ♕d4+ 33.♔g2 d2 34.♕e2 ♘xe4
White resigned.
In the end, this win allowed me to secure first place, tied with Boris Gelfand.

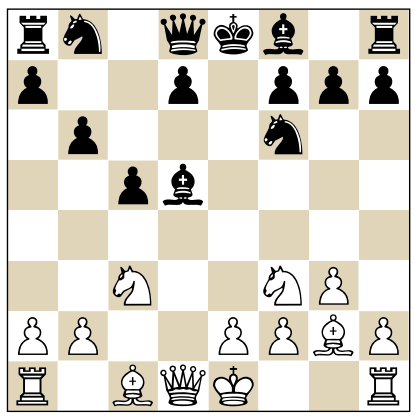
NOTES BY
Boris Gelfand

QI 6.1 – E16
Boris Gelfand
Dmitry Andreikin
Baku 2014 (1)

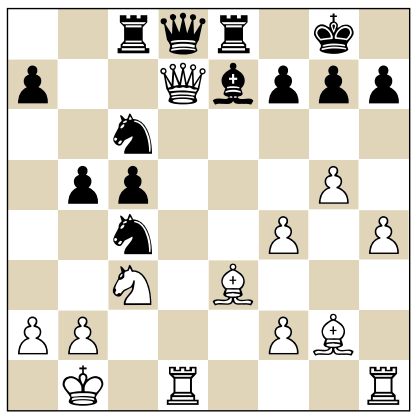
1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♗b7 5.♗g2 c5
This line had been considered bad for Black for many years, even if it brought Capablanca a convincing victory against Alekhine in New York 1927. It made a comeback in tournament practice a few years ago, mainly through the efforts of Andreikin and the late Vugar Gashimov. Vugar was the co-winner of the first Grand Prix tournament in 2008, which was also held in Baku and counts as one of his great achievements. At the opening ceremony, we all watched a movie about Vugar...
6.d5 exd5



7.cxd5!
White's idea is similar to the pawn sacrifice in the 4...♗a6 5.♕c2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 line, but with the important finesse that Black cannot recapture on d5 with the knight. After my game against Gashimov I was told by a friend of mine that White has a strong idea in this line and it didn't take me much time to find it. It soon featured in some games by strong players, so I didn't cherish any hopes that I'd ever have the chance to use it. Honestly speaking, I am surprised that Dmitry was not aware of the move 7.cxd5, as it had already been played by, amongst others, Tomashevsky, Krasenkow, Sargissian and Pashikian.
Vugar played 5... c5 against me in what turned out to be our last game, and I failed to get an advantage: 7.♘h4 g6 8.♘c3 ♗g7 9.♗g5 0-0 10.♕d2 ♕e8 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘xd5 ♗xd5 13.♗xd5 ♘c6 14.♘f3 ♖b8 15.♖c1 ♘b4 16.b3 ♘xd5 17.♕xd5 ♕e6 18.♖d1 b5 19.cxb5 ♖xb5 20.0-0 ♕xe2 21.♖d2 ♕e6 22.♕xd7 ♕xd7 23.♖xd7 ♖a5 24.♖d2 c4 25.bxc4 ½-½, Gelfand-Gashimov, Wijk aan Zee 2012.
7...♗xd5
7...♘xd5 fails to 8.♘h4, and as the queen is on d1 and not on c2, Black loses a piece.
8.♘c3



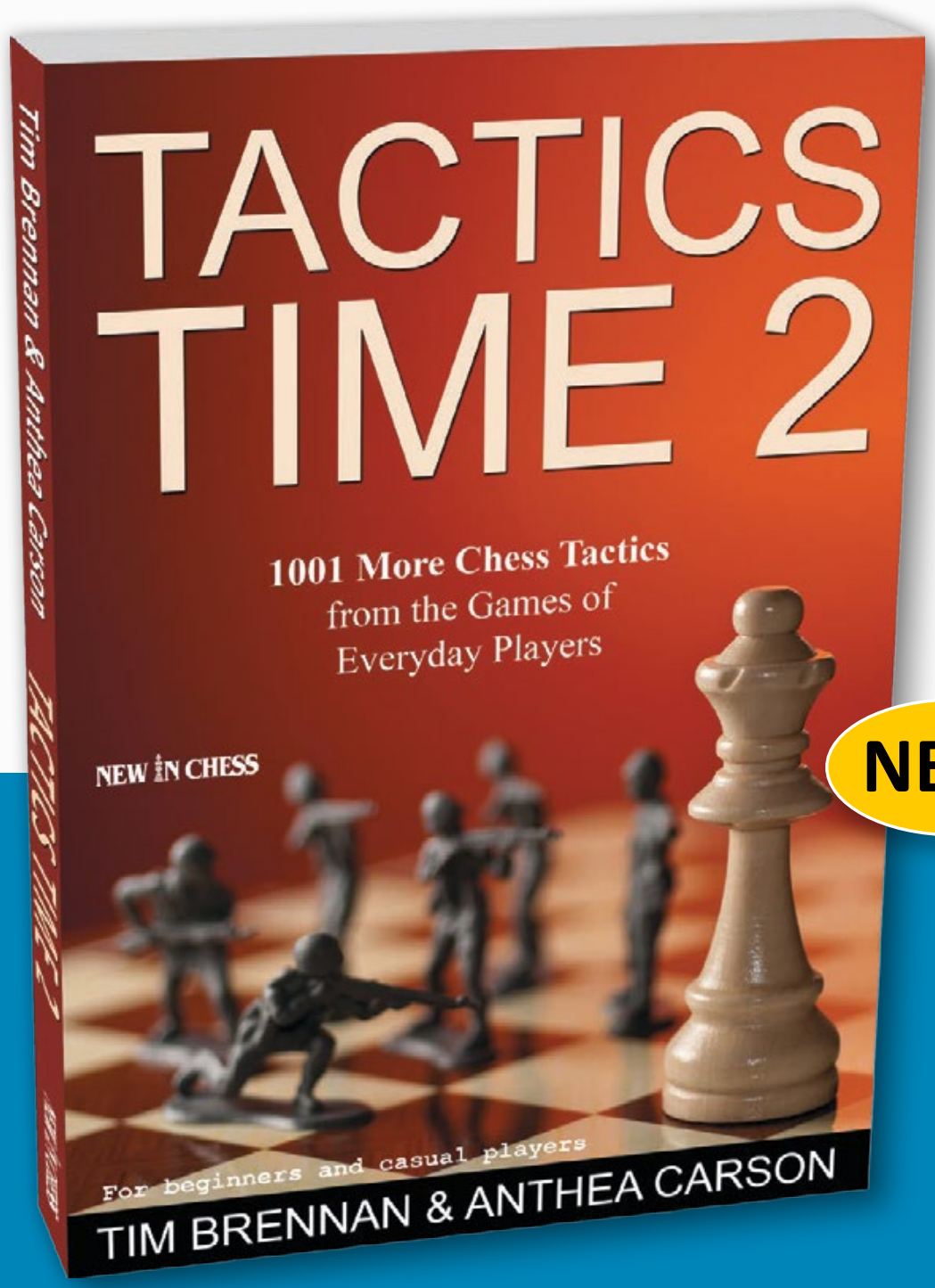
8...♗c6
Probably best is 8...♗xf3, when White has at least full compensation for the pawn, e.g. 9.exf3 ♗e7 10.f4 ♘c6 11.g4 0-0 12.♗e3 ♘e8 13.♕d2 ♖c8 14.0-0-0 ♘d6 15.♔b1 ♖e8 16.h4 b5 17.g5 ♘c4 18.♕xd7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

18...♕a5 19.♗xc6 ♕b4 20.♗c1 ♘a3+ 21.♔a1 ♘c2+ 22.♔b1 ♘a3+ 23.♔a1

Very instructive for beginners and casual players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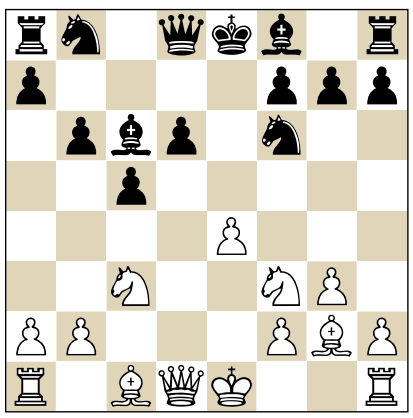
First place in Baku, bottom place in Tashkent. Boris Gelfand had to find out that two GPs back to back is no picnic.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

♘c2+ 24.♔b1 ♘a3+ 25.♔a1 ½-½, Pashikian-Inarkiev, Yerevan 2014.

9.e4 d6

It is extremely dangerous to go for 9...♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♕e2 ♕e7 12.0-0, and White has huge compensation for the sacrificed pawns.

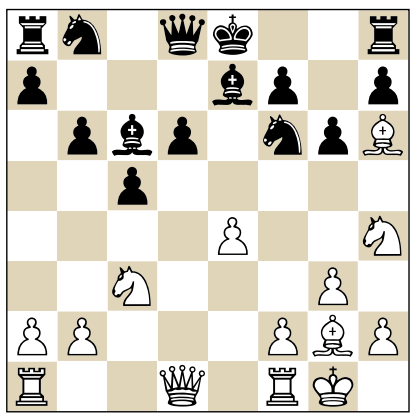


10.0-0 White could try more ambitious options, such as 10.♕b3 or 10.♗f4, but the simplest decision is the strongest. White has a big lead in development, which gives him a serious advantage.

10...♗e7 11.♘h4

Black's position would be fine if he would be in time to castle and protect the f5-square with ...g6. But unfortunately for him, he has to decide between either allowing the unpleasant ♘f5 or being left with his king in the centre.

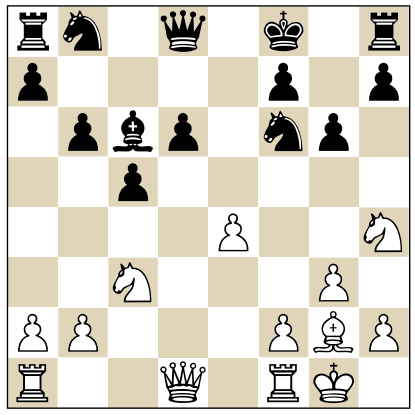
11...g6 12.♗h6



12...♗f8 12...♘bd7 is losing due to 13.e5! ♘xe5 14.f4 ♗xg2 15.fxe5 ♗xf1 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♕a4+!.

13.♗xf8 The most natural continuation. At first I was tempted by the spectacular 13.♗g5 h6 14.e5 hxg5 15.exf6 gxh4 16.♖e1+ ♔d7 17.♘d5, but then I found that Black can repel the attack with 17...♔c8 18.♘e7+ ♔c7.

13...♔xf8



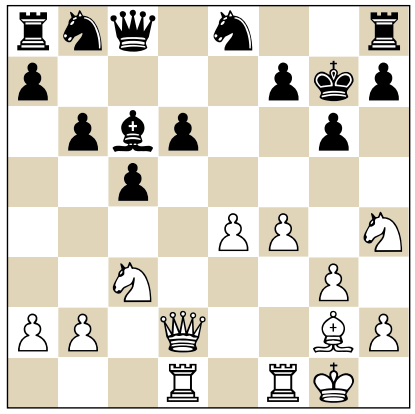
14.♕d2 A player who likes direct attacks might have chosen 14.e5 ♘e8 15.e6! ♘c7 (15...♗xg2 16.♘xg2 ♘c6 17.♖e1 is excellent for White) 16.exf7 ♗xg2 17.♔xg2 d5 18.f4!.

14...♘e8 15.♖ad1

White is in no hurry and deploys his rook. The immediate 15.f4 a6 (15...♘d7 16.e5) 16.f5 was also strong.

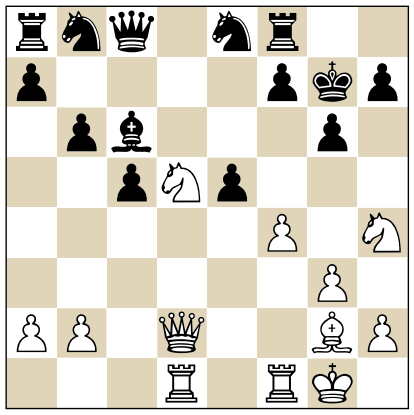
15...♔g7 After 15...♘d7 White also continues 16.f4.

16.f4 ♕c8

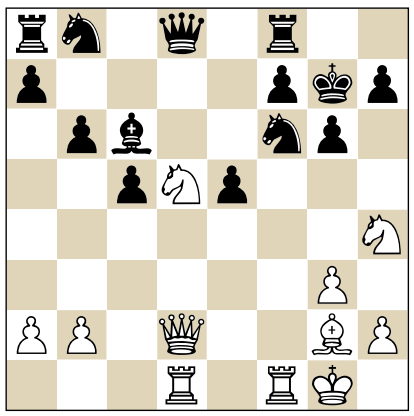


Baku 2014				cat. XXI
				TPR
1 Boris Gelfand	ISR	2748	6½	2817
2 Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2844	6½	2808
3 Evgeny Tomashevsky	RUS	2701	6	2792
4 Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2764	6	2786
5 Alexander Grischuk	RUS	2797	6	2783
6 Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2767	6	2786
7 Peter Svidler	RUS	2732	6	2789
8 Teimour Radjabov	AZE	2726	5½	2754
9 Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2764	5	2714
10 Rustam Kasimdzhanov	UZB	2706	5	2720
11 Dmitry Andreikin	RUS	2722	4½	2689
12 Leinier Dominguez	CUB	2751	3	2576

17.♘d5!
Another piece joins the attack. 17.e5 was strong as well.
17...♖f8
During the game I thought that 17...♗xd5 would have been more tenacious, but after 18.♕xd5 ♘d7 19.e5 (19.♕g5! is even stronger) 19...♖b8 20.♘f3 h6 21.f5 gxf5 22.♘h4! the knight will get to f5, which means that the game is over.
18.e5 dxe5



19.f5
A typical breakthrough that is very similar to that against the Benoni Defence.
19...♕d8 20.f6+ ♘xf6

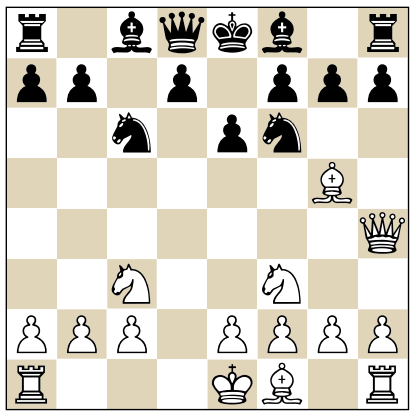


21.♘f5+
It was hard to imagine after Black's ...g7-g6 on move 11 that the knight would jump to f5 with such decisive effect.
21...♔h8 22.♕h6 ♖g8 23.♘xf6
And in view of 23...♕xf6 24.♘d6, Black resigned.
Quite a simple game, but a nice one, and I believe that it has instructional value.

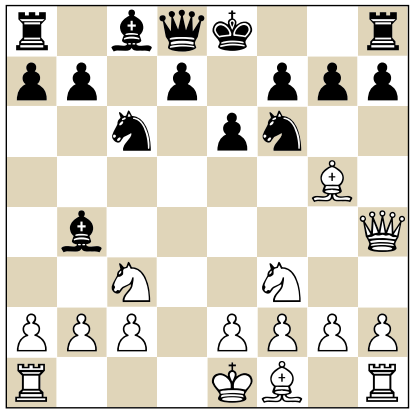
NOTES BY
Dmitry Andreikin

QP 4.11 – A46
Dmitry Andreikin
Sergey Karjakin
Tashkent 2014 (6)

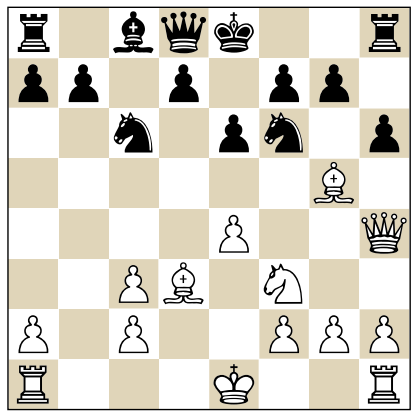
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♗g5 c5 4.♘c3 This is a rare move, which allows White to develop quickly. Earlier on I preferred 4.e3.
4...cxd4 Both 4...d5 5.e4 and 4...h6 5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.d5 will yield White a slight edge.
5.♕xd4 ♘c6 6.♕h4



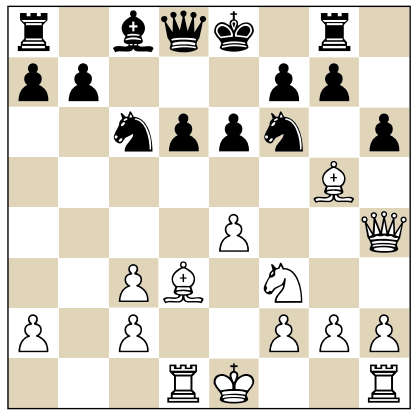
6...♗b4
This move allows White to force the game and simplify the position. Also possible is 6...♗e7 7.e4 ♕a5 8.0-0-0 a6, with varied play for both sides.



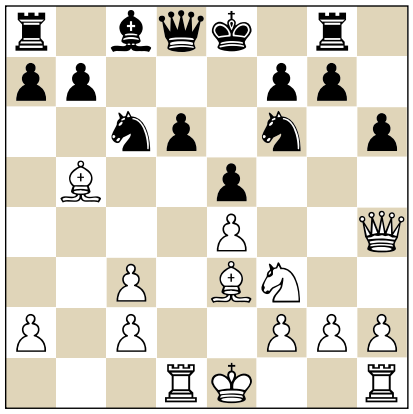
7.e4 Another interesting possibility was 7.0-0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 h6 9.♘d2!? ♕e7 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♕xf6 gxf6 12.♘e4 ♔e7 13.♘d6, when White has a perfect knight on d6. But is it possible to exploit its position?
7...♗xc3+
If the bishop moved to b4, it should sooner or later capture the white knight. 7...h6 8.♗d3 leads to transposition of moves.
8.bxc3 h6 9.♗d3
After 9.♗b5!? ♖g8! 10.♗d2 g5 11.♕xh6 ♖g6 12.♕h8+ ♖g8 13.♕h6 White has achieved nothing.



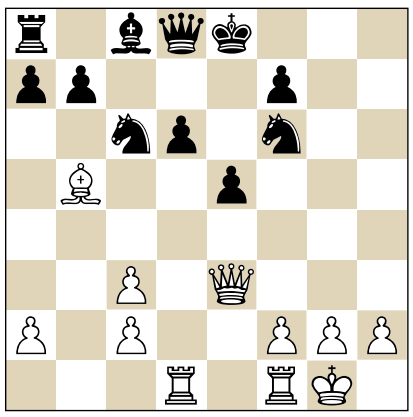
9...d6! I like this move. It reduces White's chances. After 9...♖g8?! 10.♗e3 g5 11.♕g3 d6 12.♘d4 White is slightly better.
On the other hand, 9...0-0?! 10.♗xh6! gxh6 11.♕xh6 ♘g4 (11...e5 loses to 12.♘g5) 12.♕f4 f5 13.exf5 exf5 14.♗c4+ d5 15.0-0-0 gives White a dangerous attack.
10.♖d1 ♖g8!
This is typical for this line. Black has managed to equalize in the opening, but has spent far too much time.



11.♗e3?! It was better to return the bishop to its initial position: 11.♗c1! g5 12.♕g3 e5 (after 12...g4 13.♘d4 the white queen has an important square to retreat to on e3) 13.♘d2 ♘h5 14.♕e3 ♘f4 15.♗f1! and having withdrawn his pieces, White is ready to develop a dangerous initiative and attack the pawn on d6.
11...e5 12.♗b5



12...♕c7?!
Played after much thought. At the press conference, Sergey said he considered it dangerous to play 12... g5!? 13.♘xg5 hxg5 14.♗xg5 ♖xg5 15.♕xg5 ♘xe4 16.♕e3 ♘f6 17.0-0.

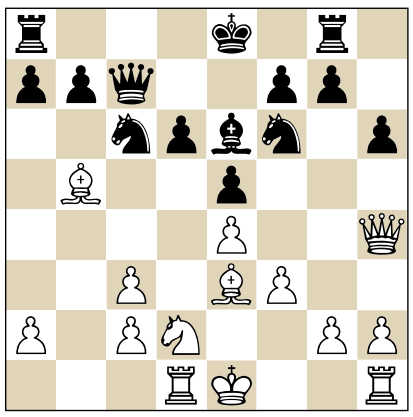


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The computer prefers Black's position and so did I during the game, but my opponent was in time-trouble. Besides, White has the exit strategy 13.♕xh6, which leads to a draw.

13.♘d2 Now my pieces attack the queenside. The position is equal, but Black has to defend.

13...♗e6 14.f3
At this point I was quite satisfied with the outcome of the opening. The position was complicated and I had more time.



MARIA EMELIANOVA

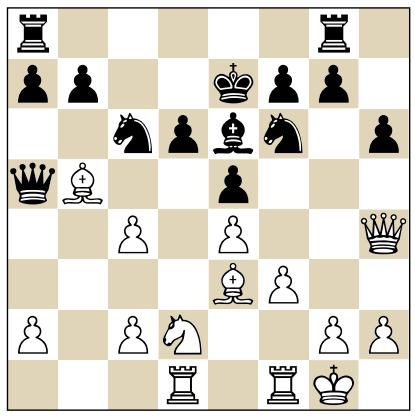
Following a modest result in Baku, Dmitry Andreikin bounced back in Tashkent. The 24-year-old Russian remained unbeaten and took clear first prize.

14...♕a5?
A nervous move. Black should play in the centre: 14...0-0-0 15.♕f2 d5! 16.♗xa7 ♘xa7 (interesting is 16... d4!? 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗xd4 exd4 19.cxd4 ♕a7 20.c3 ♕a6! – this move, which I had missed during the game, gives Black good counterplay) 17.♕xa7 dxe4 18.0-0 exf3 19.♘xf3 ♘e4 20.♕a8+ ♕b8 21.♕a5 ♕c7 22.♕a8+ ♕b8, with a draw.

15.c4 ♔e7
After 15...♕xa2 16.0-0 ♕xc2 17.♕f2 the position looks dangerous for Black.

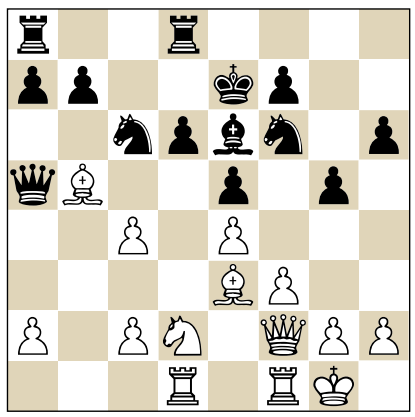
16.0-0

Tashkent 2014			cat. XXI	
				TPR
1 Dmitry Andreikin	RUS	2722	7	2857
2 Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2764	6½	2816
3 Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2764	6½	2816
4 Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2757	6	2788
5 Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2844	6	2780
6 Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2767	6	2787
7 Baadur Jobava	GEO	2717	6	2791
8 Teimour Radjabov	AZE	2726	5½	2754
9 Anish Giri	NED	2768	5	2715
10 Dmitry Jakovenko	RUS	2747	4½	2688
11 Rustam Kasimdzhanov	UZB	2706	3½	2623
12 Boris Gelfand	ISR	2748	3½	2619



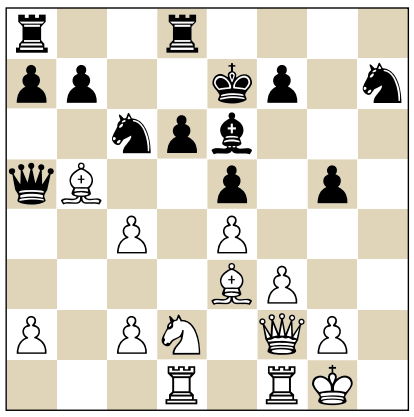
16...g5?! A careless move. He should have played 16...♖gd8 17.♘b3 ♕c7, with a slight advantage for White.

17.♕f2 ♖gd8



18.h4! White attacks the other side. It is difficult for Black to defend this position in time-trouble.

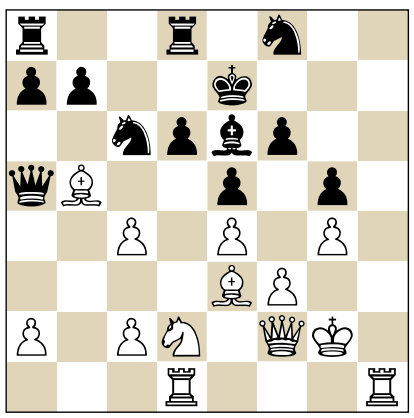
18...♘h7 19.hxg5 hxg5



20.g4!?

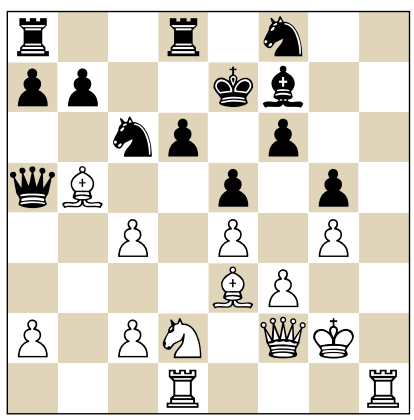
I saw a possibility to win a pawn with 20.♘b3!? ♕c7 21.c5 d5 22.exd5 ♖xd5 23.♖xd5 ♗xd5 24.♕d2 ♖d8 25.♗xg5+, but then the position gets simplified, which I didn't want.

20...f6 21.♔g2 ♘f8 22.♖h1



22...♗f7?

This move simplifies White's task. During the game I was hoping for 22...♘b4? 23.♗xg5! fxg5 24.♕e3 ♔f6 25.♖h5, and White wins.



23.♘f1!

I had planned the transfer of the knight when I played 20.g4. In this position this knight manoeuvre is especially strong.

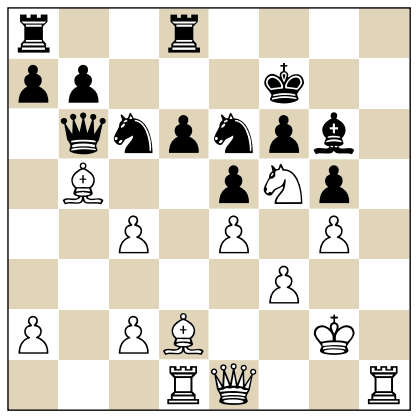
Grand Prix standings

		Baku	Tashkent	
1	Fabiano Caruana	155	75	230
2	Hikaru Nakamura	82	125	207
3	Dmitry Andreikin	20	170	190
4	Boris Gelfand	155	15	170
5	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	35	125	160
6	Sergey Karjakin	82	75	157
7	Teimour Radjabov	50	50	100
8	Alexander Grischuk	82		82
8	Peter Svidler	82		82
8	Evgeny Tomashevsky	82		82
11	Baadur Jobava		75	75
11	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave		75	75
13	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	35	15	50
14	Anish Giri		40	40
15	Dmitry Jakovenko		30	30
16	Leinier Dominguez	10		10

23...♗g6 24.♗d2?! It was easier to play 24.♘g3 ♔f7 25.♘f5 ♗xf5 26.exf5, with total white domination.

24...♕b6 25.♘e3 ♔f7 26.♕e1 ♘e6 27.♘f5

In the centre of the board, on d5, the knight would look nice but it would be less effective.



27...♕c7 The decisive mistake. My opponent had one minute left for 13 moves, so in a way the result was already predetermined.

28.c5!

This pawn push allows me to involve the light-squared bishop in the attack.

28...dxc5 29.♗c4

Decisive.

29...b5 30.♗d5 ♖ac8 31.♖h6 ♘cd4 32.♗a5

The most effective path to victory.

32...♘xc2 33.♕h1 ♕xa5 34.♖h7+

Black resigned. ■

NEW IN CHESS

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An open mind • Computer skills • No fear of deadlines

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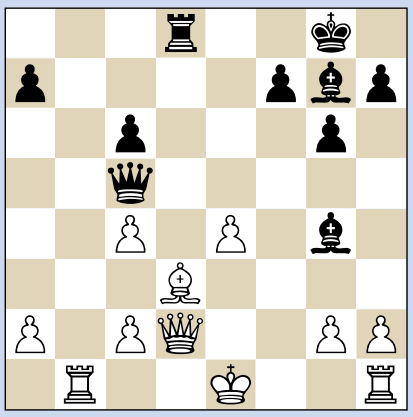
Yochanan Afek

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and everyone of us. As this is the last column in this series, I have selected a number of positions from my own games that I am not especially proud of. Hopefully the reader spots the 'brilliancies' that I missed.

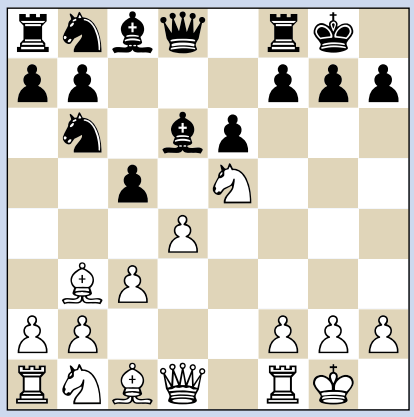
★★☆☆☆



1. Black to play

Black continued **18...♗d4** and, not without difficulties, eventually managed to convert his edge. Was there a more vigorous and smoother way to victory?

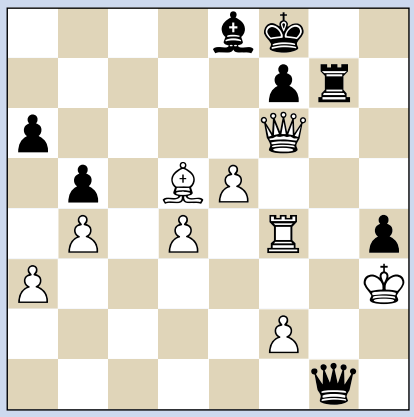
★★★☆☆



2. White to play

Following the opening moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘d5 5.♗c4 ♘b6 6.♗b3 d6 7.0-0 dxe5 8.♘xe5 ♗d6 9.d4 0-0** White here chose the aggressive looking **10.♕g4 cxd4 11.cxd4** but later lost a sharp battle. Was there a more effective option?

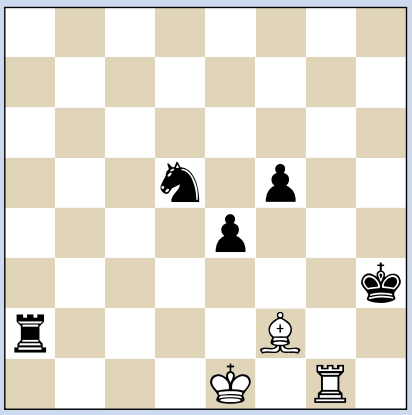
★★★☆☆



3. White to play

In this highly charged position White blundered terribly with **52.♖xh4??** and had to throw in the towel after **52...♗d7+** How could he have forced a better outcome?

★★★★☆



4. White to play

White is two pawns down and indeed lost this endgame. Can you find the study-like way in which he could have saved the day?

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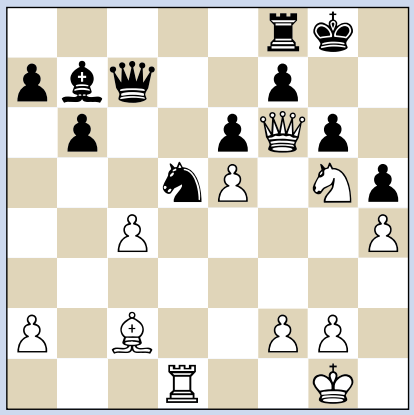
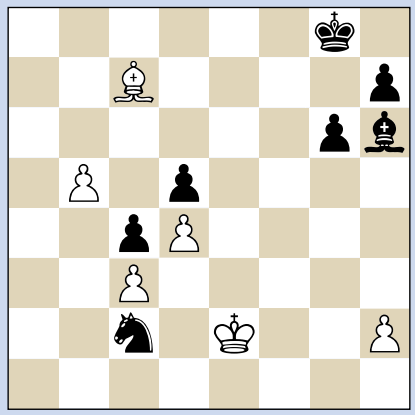


5. White to play

White played **27.♘xe6 fxe6 28.♕xg6+ ♕g7 29.♕xe6+ ♕f7 30.♕xf7+** and won, but things would not have been that clear, had Black chosen the more sensible 27...♘xf6 28.♘xc7 ♘g4 29.e6. How could White have won in a less ambiguous way?

★★★★★



6. Black to play

Black tried the desperate **47...♗e3** but had to call it a day after **48.♗e5 ♘xd4+ 49.cxd4** Was the situation really that hopeless?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 99**

Hans Ree

Anxiety and Complacency

All that has happened had to happen is a proposition that cannot be reasonably affirmed or denied, but **Hans Ree** is still not reconciled to Max Euwe's loss in 1937 against Alexander Alekhine. At the occasion of the return match between Carlsen and Anand he relived the Dutch trauma.

'Loco', said the Spanish commentator when he saw Carlsen's 26th move, ♔d2, in his sixth game against Anand. The word means crazy. It reminded me of a popular maxim used during blitz games at the chess café that I frequented in my youth: 'His great learning has driven him to insanity.' Another one, often used by Dutch IM Nicolaas Cortlever, was: 'The outskirts of the town offered a dismal view. One cannot imagine what people were eating there.' This was when he was snatching material at an edge of the board.

I do not really think that playing chess is bad for the mind, but the idea appealed to me, because I had recently read an article in a Dutch newspaper about a neurological study suggesting that playing chess will shrink your brain. Apparently, a team of Swiss researchers headed by a man named Jürgen Hänggi had scanned the brains of 20 expert players and 20 novices and found that the brains of the expert players were significantly smaller.

When you've had enough of unsubstantiated claims about the value of chess in combating Alzheimer and other kinds of dementia, the story of the shrinking brain might supply a fresh perspective.

But was it true, and if so, what did it mean and what was the cause of the shrinking? In the article, a tentative explanation was given, but I couldn't really understand it. The curse of playing chess, perhaps.

But in reality, the situation may not be all that serious. On the website of the magazine *Wired*, the neuropsychologist Christian Jarrett pointed out that bigger doesn't always mean better: 'Elephants and whales have massive brains, but they are not the cleverest animals on the planet.' True in itself, but not a very convincing argument, as whales and elephants need a big part of their brains just to keep their big bodies functioning and anyway, they are considered to be quite intelligent. But Jarrett also suggested that the shrinkage might have been caused at the onset of adolescence by a beneficial process of synaptic pruning that may lead to greater efficiency.

Still, the idea of the shrinking brain remained a bit worrisome, especially when I remembered that a Dutch professional cyclist once said: 'I never think, for thinking gives you a thick head.'

I had a fantasy of expert chess players whose shrinking brains were splashing around in an expanded head; a disturbing image, though it made their miracles of imagination and calculation even more remarkable. But then, like the Spanish commentator and in fact all commentators, I was stunned by the double blunder when both Carlsen and Anand missed the devastating and fairly easy 26...♘xe5. What was going on? Beneficial pruning, my hat.

A medical miracle

In 1983, the late Dutch grandmaster Hein Donner wrote a phantasmagorical story based on a real event. He described how a professor, followed by doctors and nurses in a ritual procession, had entered his patient's room. Then, when Donner asked about the cause of all his afflictions, the professor had solemnly sent his underlings away to be alone with him.

It turned out that the arteries leading to Donner's brain were completely clotted up. His brain was almost dry, in fact, receiving at most 10 percent of the blood that it needed. His IQ, said the professor, could not be higher than that of an idiot. His

case was unique in the history of medicine.

'But with 10 percent I have beaten Bobby Fischer', said Donner. 'What would I have been with a hundred percent?' 'Shakespeare', said the professor softly, and then, hardly audible: 'Probably Leonardo.'

In the story Donner decided to refuse the risky operation that might cure his condition, which is also what he did in real life. He wrote the story between his first cerebral hemorrhage, from which he had reasonably recovered, and the much more serious second one, which would disable him for the rest of his life.

Sometimes, when writing an article about something, I digress at such length that the original subject disappears from sight. This article was meant to be about return matches for the World Championship, and the chess player's brain was not supposed to be on the agenda.

MAX EUWE CENTRE AMSTERDAM

Max Euwe gently adjusts the traditional laurel wreath. Alexander Alekhine is World Champion again. In the 1937 match the Dutchman paid the price for his over-optimistic play and suffered an unambiguous defeat, 15½-9½.

Computer plays revenge match

I almost wrote 'revenge' match, a word that I do not particularly like. It seems to me that only English speakers use this grim expression. The French word *revanche*, common in many languages, has a more general meaning and a Frenchman or Dutchman can even take revanche by reciprocating a good deed.

I have the impression that the brutal expression 'revenge match' is not often used in connection with this year's World Championship, nor would it be appropriate. One takes revenge to correct an injustice; to regain something that has been taken from you illegitimately. Anand has never given the impression that he considered his loss of the title in this light. On the contrary, his play in 2013 rather made it seem as if he felt doomed and that his loss was what Kasparov might call a historically necessary consequence of the inexorable progress of chess development. But I may read too much in the word revenge. That it is often used loosely became quite clear when I read about a computer that was going to play a 'revenge match'.

There must have been return matches during which revenge was very much on the mind of one of the players. I am thinking of Viktor Kortchnoi in his battles against Anatoly Karpov and of Mikhail Botvinnik, a tough man who in his heyday regarded being World Champion as his natural right. On the other hand, Boris Spassky apparently once said to Botvinnik that he had the impression that Botvinnik already collected information for a possible return match during his first match against a new challenger. As Spassky put it, Botvinnik regarded the first match as a kind of training match for the return match. Botvinnik had just smiled and replied that Spassky was a clever man. You don't have to seek revenge for losing a training match.

What to do with the traitor?

A man who wrote and talked about revenge and really meant it, is Alexander Nikitin, a former coach of both Karpov and Kasparov, who wrote about his own personal revenge in his book *Mit Kasparov zum Schachgipfel*. ('With Kasparov to the chess summit'. There is a Russian and a German edition, but as far as I know no English one.)

Last year he returned to the subject in an interview on Vladislav Tkachiev's website *WhyChess*, which was once a great site but can now only be described as 'still in existence'.

In 1976, Nikitin, who had a high position on the Soviet Sports Committee, read in a French press report that Karpov was negotiating with Fischer about a match. As the Sports Committee had not given permission for these negotiations, Nikitin informed his superiors about Karpov's offence, thereby overplaying his hand. In fact, Karpov had been granted permission by a much higher authority, the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

After being informed about Nikitin's denunciation, Karpov demanded that he be fired. I am reminded of Donner again, who liked to quote from the Cuban Revolutionary Catechism, or his version of it:

Hans Ree

'Question: what do we do with the traitor? Answer: after a short and fair trial the traitor will be executed.'

After a short trial Nikitin was demoted to the function of trainer of the club Spartak and, as he tells on *WhyChess*, in the presence of four chess officials he promised to have his revenge.

As luck would have it, one of the members of Spartak was an extremely promising youngster, at the time still called Garry Weinstein. As Nikitin puts it in his book, he swore that he would dethrone Karpov, who had wrecked his career, in the same way as Karpov himself when planning revenge: by using someone else as a tool. In 1985, Nikitin got his revenge when his pupil, or tool, Garry Kasparov became World Champion.

On *WhyChess* Nikitin said: 'I am far from thinking that had we not met, Garik would not have become champion', but this was not my impression of his feelings when I read his book in 1991.

A hero's downfall

As one of the greatest living experts on World Championship return matches – only Karpov had more experience with them – Kasparov gave a preview on the website *chess.com* entitled 'Carlsen – Anand II and the Psychology of the Rematch'. He wrote: 'Anxiety and complacency are the natural enemies of the defending champion and they can be difficult to deal with, especially for the first time, as Carlsen is doing in this match.'

He should know. After three matches against Botvinnik, Vasily Smyslov said that it appeared to him as if he had played against Botvinnik all his life. Kasparov spent a much bigger part of his life playing against Karpov.

Complacency at first, anxiety when things did not work out as expected, and finally desperation; these words seem to fit Max Euwe's state of mind during his return match against Alekhine in 1937. I reread the chapter on that match in Alexander Münninghoff's fine biography of Euwe, which was a rather painful thing to do. How happy the Dutch nation had been in 1935, when Euwe had become World Champion. Not only the chess players were happy; in 1935 Euwe had become the embodiment of the characteristics that the Dutch proudly thought of as their own: sobriety and immunity to the superficial extravagances of flashy foreigners. Just as in 1954, when Germany's victory in the world soccer championship was seen by the Germans as a sign of political and economic rebirth, Euwe was exactly the man needed in the Netherlands of 1935, where as a result of the strict austerity policy of the Dutch government, the great and harsh economic depression persisted longer than in most other countries.

Then came the match of 1937, which turned out to be a disaster for Euwe: 15½-9½ for Alekhine in the games that really counted for the World Championship and 17½-12½ altogether after the last five games, which were called exhibition games.

Spiteful journalists

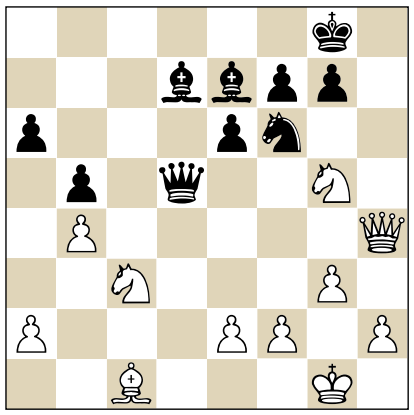
Contrary to the current perception of that match, most people initially regarded Euwe as the favourite, as he had not only beaten Alekhine in 1935, but had finished ahead of him in all three tournaments that they had played in between the two matches. In 1937, Euwe won the first game. After five games he was 3-2 ahead, but then things went wrong and after 10 games Alekhine was leading 6½-3½.

Münninghoff wrote: 'As could have been expected, the public and especially the press turn against their favourite. The first ungracious allusions to the alleged luck Euwe had had because of his opponent's drinking habits in 1935 can be heard.'

Euwe himself said later (as quoted by Münninghoff): 'The press and my friends had totally turned my head, everyone had his mind made up before the match had even started, and the conclusion was always: why all the bother and effort in order to defeat Mr. Alekhine again? I allowed myself to be swayed by that; I only found out how badly mistaken I had been when, after 10 games, I found myself three points behind because of my over-optimistic play.'

Four blunders in a row

To show that reciprocal blunders as between Carlsen and Anand are not unique in the history of World Championship matches, I will give you a diagram from game 16.



Alekhine-Euwe
Wch match 1937 (16)
position after 25.♘c3

Alekhine, playing White, has a pawn more, but with his bishop pair Black has sufficient compensation. Here, however, Euwe played 25...♕e5. Now, after 26.♕h8+ ♔xh8 27.♘xf7+ ♔g8 28.♘xe5 ♗xb4 29. ♘xd7, Black's compensation for the pawn would have evaporated. But Alekhine played 26.♗b2. He had not seen the trick and neither had Euwe, who gave him a second chance with 26...♗c6. Now 27.♕h8+ would have been even stronger than at the previous move. White would come out two pawns ahead, with a clearly winning position. Münninghoff wrote: 'Two moves long, the audience must exercise extreme self-control, because everyone sees it except the players.' Alekhine played 27.a3 and after 27...♗d6 the ♕h8+ trick was gone.

Four blunders in a row; this may well be unique in the history of championship matches. The game ended in a draw after 65 moves.

Dutch self-denial

At the start of the match, Alekhine had said that he was fighting for his life. This is not a sentiment that you would expect from modern champions. When they lose their title, they return to a comfortable life. In 1984/85, Kasparov was perhaps the last champion who really felt that he was fighting for his life. I find rich champions slightly less interesting than financially struggling ones.

It seems that shortly after the match Alekhine said that in 1935 he had only lent out his title for two years. This is a view that has appealed to many chess writers.

Euwe later said that when he became champion in 1935, he had played worse than Alekhine, and that when he lost his title in 1937 he had played better than him. But as Euwe put it, 'Julius Caesar already said it: to keep what you have conquered is harder than to conquer it in the first place.'

About the disparaging reaction to Euwe's loss Münninghoff wrote: 'In the Dutch sporting press the mechanism of self-denial, in vogue till the present day, cranked into motion: the didn't-I-tell-you effect. Didn't I tell you: Alekhine had lost in 1935 because he had been so drunk that he couldn't distinguish a knight from a bishop. Didn't I tell you: when push comes to shove, a Dutchman will never beat a foreigner.'

What do these spiteful Dutch journalists, gloating that Euwe had been just lucky in 1935 because Alekhine was drinking remind us of? They resemble the Internet hooligans that Dominic Lawson described in his article 'Dialogues of the deluded' in the previous issue of this magazine; gloating seems to be timeless. There is a difference, though. The Dutch journalists of 1937 were kept in check because they were writing for publications that adhered to certain standards. The modern Internet kibitzer goes all out.

> 'Petrosian called his many hours spent in the press room an excellent school for playing a World Championship match.'

Lawson quoted a certain AlexandraThess, who wrote on *chessgames.com*: 'Such a weak player. That Carlsen punk can't even win a basic endgame.' Euwe and Alekhine were never described in this vile way, not even after their blunders in the 16th game.

Joys of the press room

I found it heartening to see that Lawson had enjoyed himself immensely in the press room during the match in Moscow in 1985 between Karpov and Kasparov. After reading his book on the 1993 match between Kasparov and Short, *The Inner Game*, in which he heaped scorn on every strong player who had come his way, I had the impression that Lawson was contemptuous of all grandmasters. Even his good friend Nigel Short was coming out badly, which made me think at the time that with a friend like Lawson he didn't need enemies. But how wrong I was! Nigel has cheerfully and indefatigably gone on making new enemies ever since and Lawson proves to be a true chess lover after all.

I have never been in a Russian press room, but I did visit the three last matches between Karpov and Kasparov, where the atmosphere was still similar to that which Lawson enjoyed. Tigran Petrosian has written a fine description of these press rooms, which I have quoted in New In Chess 2010/6. He called his many hours spent in the press room an excellent school for playing a World Championship match.

When chess was weird

I not only cherish the memory of the discussions about the positions on the board, but in retrospect also all the conspiracy theories that we talked about, though at the time I found them frivolous. There were always hints of something dark and sensational. Helpers changed camps and betrayed their secrets. A guru who had successfully advised Kasparov to keep to his first three ranks in his last game of the 1985 match, reappeared as a helper of Karpov in the match in Sevilla 1987 and might have triumphed if Karpov had not, in a moment of weakness in the final game, played 45...h6-h5, thereby breaking the sorcerer's golden rule.

Gambling rings were supposed to be involved, the KGB even. Karpov and Kasparov themselves were supposed to have made deals to play a few prearranged draws or even, to heighten the suspense, to arrange a 'you win this one, I'll win the next' kind of exchange. Paranoia ranged in the press rooms. Chess felt important.

Nowadays my newspaper no longer sends me to these events. Like all newspapers in the world, it has stopped throwing around money. Besides, chess is no longer as important as it was in the Netherlands.

And anyway, why should I go there? With the advent of computer assessments, which are usually to the point, the press rooms have become a wasteland. There are not even chess boards there. For photographers and video reporters hunting for sound bites, there is still a reason to visit the events, but for me the only good reason to be on the spot would be to meet old friends. But most of those are also at home, watching the excellent coverage on the Internet. ■

Humans in the Engine Age

The first book in this issue is Volume I of *For Friends and Colleagues* by Mark Dvoretsky, the world-famous Russian trainer. You might call it a chess autobiography. Dvoretsky doesn't talk about his private life at all, but talks openly and candidly about his professional life as a player and trainer in Russia between 1970 and the present day. When you think of all the fantastic players he's been involved with (most notably Yusupov and Dolmatov) and all the highs and lows of their careers, then you'd expect it to be a fascinating read… and it is!

I've talked before (see New In Chess 2014/5) about the enormous impact that Dvoretsky had on my chess career in just two weeks of training in 1994 and 1995. It's maybe just worth elaborating a bit on those experiences.

To be honest (shameful admission), I don't think I'd heard of Dvoretsky before I went to see him. My friend Steve Giddins – who was working in Moscow at the time – took lessons from a Russian IM called Igor Belov, who had worked as an assistant at the Dvoretsky-Yusupov school and he had told Steve all about Dvoretsky. Steve organized everything for me, including a place to stay in Moscow, and I just had to… turn up! I'm not sure what I was expecting from the training. I definitely imagined it would be hard work, but well… I was used to that.

At the time, I was going through an extremely rough patch in my chess career. I'd achieved the IM title at the age of 14, which in those days was pretty good, but it had taken me another five years to get my GM title. My rating then was around 2560. I had hoped that being liberated from the stress of achieving GM norms would allow my rating to soar past 2600 and above, but that just hadn't happened.

> 'Yes, chess is difficult. It's normal to spend hours and hours on a single complicated chess position.'

I was working between 8 and 10 hours every day and starting to lose courage.

That first week's training was undoubtedly the most important week in my chess life, maybe even my whole life. Twenty years later I still remember masses of the exercises Dvoretsky set me to solve, so the lessons were clearly wonderfully interesting from the technical point of view. More importantly, however, I came away from that week with a general feeling that sustained me throughout the rest of my professional career.

First of all, the feeling that, yes, chess is difficult. It's normal to spend hours and hours on a single complicated chess position and only to grasp its essence after many false trails and unsound attempts. It's not a sign of stupidity that it took you so long: it's a sign of the right spirit that you kept at it for so many hours. I needed to hear that so much, because that persistence was the biggest skill that I possessed in chess!

Secondly, a feeling that it was worthwhile carrying on with chess. A feeling that I might be capable of getting somewhere in my chess career, even though it was clear I was never going to be one of the very best.

To be honest, I'm not sure how Dvoretsky managed the second. It certainly wasn't by giving fulsome praise, or by giving you easy tasks to solve to make you feel good. I think it was the feeling he conveyed of being just honestly interested in you as a student and really wanting the maximum for you. Quite amazing, isn't it? I mean, he'd worked with many of the best Russian and European juniors, seen all those enormous talents and yet he still seemed to think it was worthwhile investing effort and energy in a struggling English player without any world-class ability. In any case, the phrase 'Mr. Dvoretsky thinks you can do it!' was the way I kept myself going in those inevitable dark moments when chess seemed too hard and too cruel to bear!

I enjoyed this book greatly and it's interesting to read on several levels. First of all, it's a great glimpse of Rus-

sian chess life in that era. Certainly for non-Russians (like me), it's a real eye-opener. There's a huge amount of human suffering in that story but I'm a little ashamed to say that the thing that stuck the most in my mind was this episode when Dvoretsky was preparing Chekhov for the World Junior Championship.

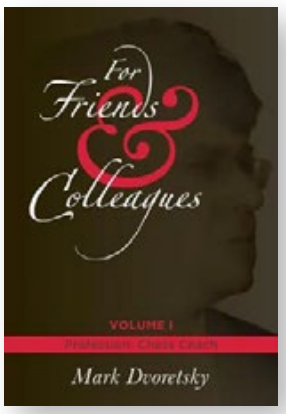
Dvoretsky writes: 'No matter how highly qualified a coach is, he cannot be competent in every area; there is always something that he does not know well. It is important to understand and accept that, and, if possible, to arrange for one's students to consult with an expert.

'We needed a serious overhaul of the opening repertoire, in particular an active opening for Black in response to 1. e4, because Chekhov only played the Petroff. For White we needed a solid system against the Sicilian Defence, and it was clear that we did not have time to master the main line. The master (and later famous grandmaster) that we had invited, Evgeny Sveshnikov, helped solve both problems. For Black he introduced us to the Sveshnikov Variation, which was played, at the time, by chess players from only his hometown: Sveshnikov himself, Timoschenko and Panchenko. For White, he explained the 2.c3 system, which had not yet become fashionable.'

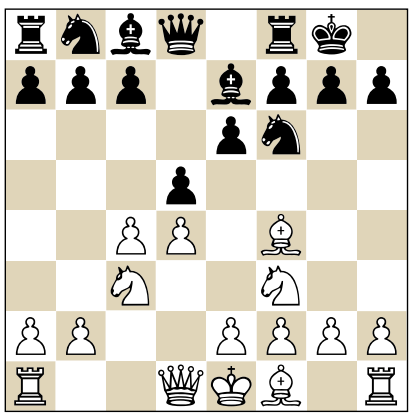
Jealousy! Learning the Sveshnikov from the man himself! And the 2.c3 Sicilian as well! I'm trying to think of the English equivalent of that… learning the Grob from Basman? Some days, you just wish you'd been born Russian!

Secondly, Dvoretsky is the type of person who clearly thought very deeply about his own experiences as a player while they were happening (he had a rating of around 2540 in 1974 so he was extremely strong), and these thoughts were an important source of input for his coaching. It's therefore very interesting to read about the background for some of the things he recommends in his books.

For Friends & Colleagues Volume1 Profession: Chess Coach
Mark Dvoretsky
Russell Enterprises, 2014



For example, he placed a strong emphasis on preparing for tournaments with physical exercise with a competitive element. I hadn't expected that at all from Dvoretsky, who definitely looked like a chap who loves his food! (Me too at that time, by the way!) He became convinced of this, however, by the following episode in his playing career:



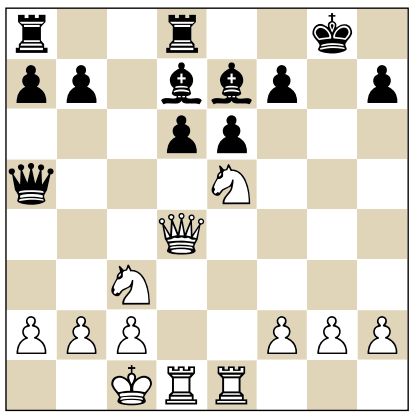
'I did not play well in this qualifier but the tournament did not go to waste. It allowed me to make one useful observation for the future. More precisely, not the tournament itself, but my unsuccessful preparation for it, did.

'I followed well-known advice and decided to gather my strength by doing outdoor sports. I bought a voucher to a holiday house near Moscow and skied every day. Nevertheless I played horribly.

'Reflecting on this tournament, I realized that physical training by itself is not sufficient to be on form, if it is boring, emotionless. As a result, I developed a formula for myself: intense physical activity with an intense emotional background. Physical activity is necessary; it creates a power supply, increases stamina and reduces fatigue. However, it is important to have a reserve of not only physical, but also nervous energy, as well as emotional vigour. So, it is necessary to avoid routine and monotony (both in sports and in chess training), and tournament preparation has to be lively, exciting, fun. Physical activity is best in the form of games. In the future, after I had become a coach, I have tried to follow this formula at every training session preceding an important competition, and as a rule, this training has brought excellent results.'

Finally, although Dvoretsky warns his readers at the start that there is much less pure chess content than in his other books, there is still lots of typically fascinating Dvoretsky material, none of which I'd seen before. In this book, however, you don't have to solve any puzzles to see the beautiful solutions: you get them for free! If there's one particular example that sticks in my mind, then it has to be this example of Tal's tactical genius, taken from the chapter 'Meetings with Tal'.

Despite playing a good attacking game against Pohla at the 1972 Viljandi tournament (funnily enough, a game that doesn't seem to have made it into the databases), Dvoretsky was unhappy with his choice on the 14th move after which he felt that Black still had good chances. Despite examining many dangerous possibilities (he gives many of them in the book) he was unable to find any strengthening of his play. So he showed the position to Tal after 13…♖fd8:

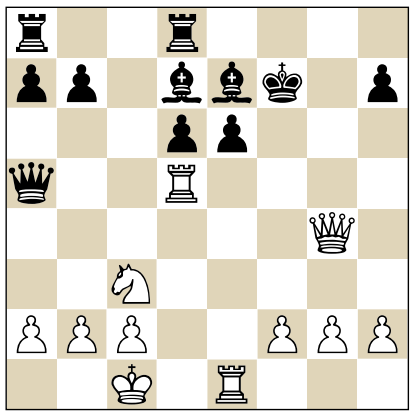


'I said: "Can you imagine? Such a dangerous position, and no winning com-

Sadler on Books

bination!" Tal exclaimed: "There is no combination? No way! I quit chess if that is so!"

'He thought for just a few seconds and demonstrated the solution: **14.♕g4+ ♔f8 15.♘xf7 ♔xf7 16.♖d5**



'A brilliant way to block the 5th rank that I had missed. **16...exd5** 16...♕a6 17.♖f5+. **17.♕h5+ ♔f8 18.♕h6+** with imminent checkmate.

'Tal's combinational talent is striking. Out of many tempting continuations, he intuitively chose a move that was far from obvious and the only correct one.'

Typically for Dvoretsky though, the story goes further. He recalls how he showed the position to David Navara during a training session in 2007 and how Navara found the solution as quickly as Tal did. He also describes the tragicomic episode that occurred to him in 1988, when he reached the same position after White's 13th move in a game against Scholset. While waiting for Black to move, he began to compose an article in his mind explaining how Tal had helped him to win a game. When Black played 13…♗c6 instead of 13…♖fd8, he was so disappointed that he blundered and lost!

It's a great book, full of humour, great chess, disappointments (some on the chess level, some on the personal level with students), pride and success! One for every chess player's bookshelf.

Quality Chess continues to produce an astonishing amount of high-quality opening books, and the latest offering from the Indian GM Parimarjan Negi – *1.e4 vs The French, Caro-Kann & Philidor* – is no exception. Actually, this book should be recommended reading for any young (or old!) player who aspires to grandmaster level and above. It's nothing to do with the specific analysis of these openings (although that is superb of course) but it's more to do with the attitude to opening preparation that Negi demonstrates. In order to explain this, I'm going to have to be unbelievably mean to another Quality Chess author, Emanuel Berg, in particular about Volume II of his series on the French Defence. Let me say right now that Berg is a leading expert on the French Defence and that all of his excellent books are essential reading if you want to play the opening. But… he's just drawn the short straw in this case!

The role of computer analysis in opening books is a tricky one. Essentially, there are now three types of books:

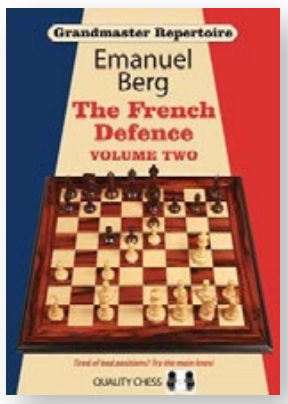
1. The author lets the engine decide what is best in a certain position and writes up the engine's main line of analysis and its evaluation of the resulting position.

2. The author recommends a certain course of action in a position based on his judgment and uses the engine to provide corroborating evidence. If the computer can hold it, then it's good.

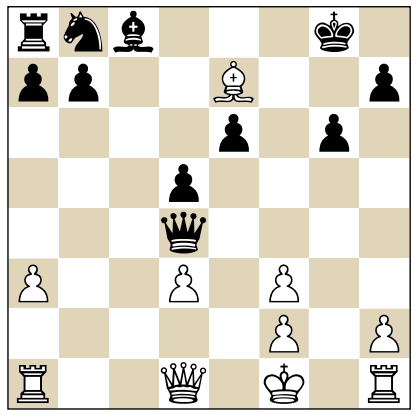
3. …Well, I hadn't seen another type, until now!

While I was reading Emanuel Berg's second volume on the French, my face was often ending up in contortions of agony of which Rowan Atkinson would have been proud. He discusses the French Winawer, so you shouldn't be expecting beauty of course, but some things felt really extremely ugly. Bear in mind that Berg's suggestion here was an original idea – you can certainly never accuse him of just repeating standard theory in his books.

Grandmaster Repertoire – The French Defence Volume 2 – The critical 7.Qg4 line in the Winawer
Emanuel Berg
Quality Chess, 2013

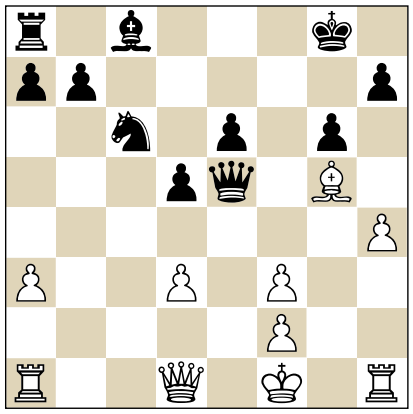


Berg:
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e7 7.♕g4 0-0 8.♗d3 f5 9.exf6 ♖xf6 10.♗g5 ♖f7 11.♕h5 g6 12.♕d1 ♕a5 13.♘f3 ♖xf3 The most practical decision according to Berg. **14.gxf3 ♕xc3+ 15.♔f1 c4** A novelty; 15...♘bc6 16.dxc5 e5 17.h4 is the game Rudolf-Jurek, Pardubice 2007, which Berg assesses as clearly better for White. **16.♗xe7 cxd3 17.cxd3 ♕xd4**

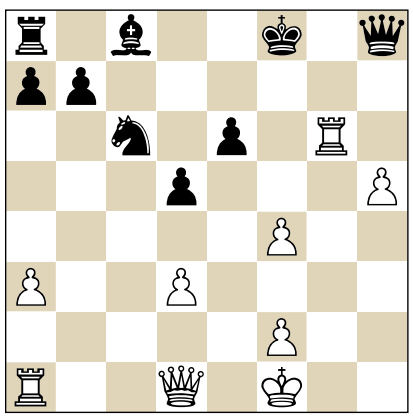


Berg comments: 'This position arises pretty much by force after the exchange sacrifice on f3. Black has an extra pawn as well as the better structure. This in combination with White's uncoordinated pieces and vulnerable king give Black full compensation. I will offer a few sample lines to show what might follow next. Certainly some practical games are needed in order to give a definitive assessment of the position, but in my opinion Black has a fully playable position and all three results are possible.'

We now follow a line which my engine suggests, so I imagine that Berg was guided by it too. There's one moment where my eyebrows went up...
18.h4 ♘c6 19.♗g5 ♕e5



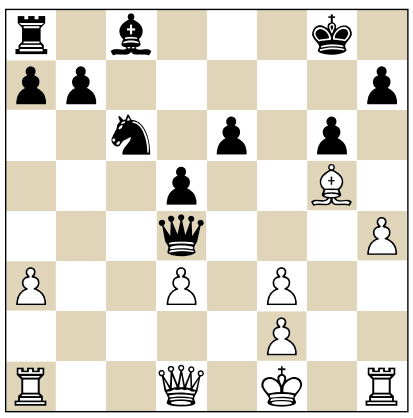
Just this move really got the alarm bells ringing for me. It's such a computer move: Black is trying to stop h4-h5 by any means, and he's willing to lose a tempo to force f3-f4 (blocking in the bishop) so that he can try to win it after with ...h6. The computer's line continues: **20.f4 ♕g7 21.h5 h6 22.♖g1 hxg5 23.♖xg5 ♔f8 24.♖xg6 ♕h8**



which Berg assesses as unclear and the engine assesses as 0.00. I felt a bit queasy seeing this line, but there's no denying the engine keeps it together.

Let's now read Negi's comments on the position in his book as he recommends this line for White!

Negi:



position after 19.♗g5

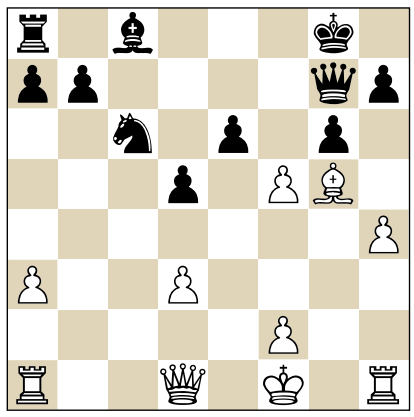
'Just check what Negi has to say about Berg's lines before you try and play them!'

'Had this been an original position, I would have been tempted to stop here and assess it as more pleasant for White. However, I noticed that this has already been analysed by Berg in the Winawer volume as well as tested in a few correspondence games. Therefore it makes sense to go deeper and have some concrete ideas ready.'

19...♕e5

'This is the critical idea, as recommended by Berg. Black provokes f3-f4, after which the bishop on g5 is slightly uncomfortable. As a downside, it seems to me that Black's set-up is based on concrete tactical ideas, without actually solving the essential problem of the dark squares.'

20.f4 ♕g7 21.f5



Novelty, and to be frank, amazing to just give this away in a book!

'This is the point where I would like to deviate from Emanuel's analysis as well as a subsequent correspondence game. The doubled pawns are a major nuisance for White, so it feels logical to give one of them away for positional gain. Now the bishop on g5 gets some breathing room and White has a free hand to continue playing on the dark squares.'

21...exf5 22.♔g2 f4

'It seems quite sensible to give back a pawn to open some lines for the black pieces. Obviously Black has some alternatives, but the character of the position remains the same.'

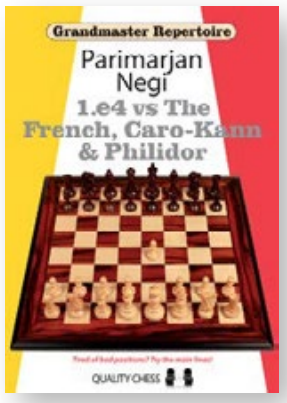
23.♕f3 ♗e6 24.♕xf4 ♖f8 25.♕e3 ♕d7 26.♖he1 ♗g4 27.♗f4

'Black is under slight but continuing pressure.'

It's so good! It shows everything that you need to produce world-class preparation. First of all, Negi makes a solid positional assessment and also correctly evaluates what 19...♕e5 really is: an ingenious tactical solution to an irreparable structural problem. Negi then uses his judgment about the position to come up with a new idea that the engine only gets enthusiastic about the further you proceed into the position. Really really impressive.

I could give many more examples of this type of classiness. For example, from the section on the Caro-Kann: 'It is also worth emphasizing that, as in many other Caro-Kann lines, the computer does not recognize the power of White's kingside attack until it is too late'.

Ahh… proof that humans still matter in the engine age! Both these Quality Chess books are warmly recommended, but just check what Negi has to say about Berg's lines before you try and play them!

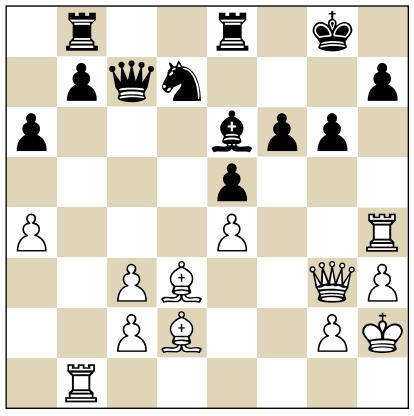


Grandmaster Repertoire – 1.e4 vs The French, Caro-Kann & Philidor
Parimarjan Negi
Quality Chess, 2014

Just one last little thing that I came across. I've recently been dipping into US chess from the 1960s and 1970s. The reason for that was that I came across a GoFundMe initiative to save 77-year-old GM William Lombardy from eviction from his home due to

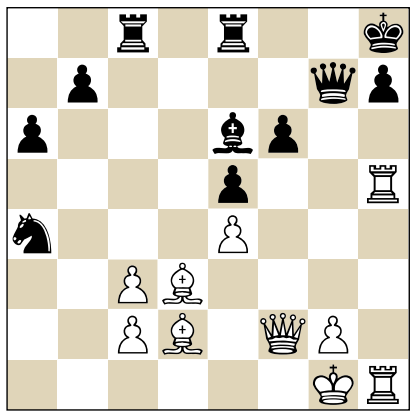
rent arrears. $6000 has been raised so far although more is still apparently required. As befits a (formerly) well-prepared player, I really only knew Lombardy's name from the games he'd played in one of my favourite openings: the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian. So I thought it wouldn't be bad to get to know a little more about him. Dipping into his recently published autobiography (*Understanding Chess, My System, My Games, My Life*) I came across something quite funny. I don't know whether anyone else has been following the TCEC competition for computers, but there's been a lot of interesting chess played there. In the beginning I was a bit giggly about the standard of play, and that only got worse when I saw this game:

Hannibal 1.5x5 *(2924)*
Alfil 14.1 *(2447)*
TCEC 2014 (6)



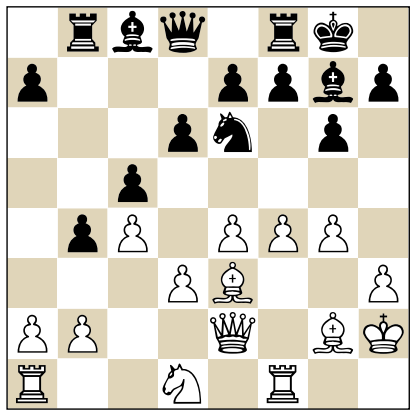
White's rook on h4 is a touch short of squares so White came up with the following fine 'wrong-way around' attack:
27.♖h6 ♘c5 28.h4

Rooks first, and then the pawn follows! I was chuckling to myself a little, but take a look at what happened in the next 5 moves. **28...♕g7 29.♕f2 ♘xa4 30.h5 gxh5 31.♖xh5 ♔h8 32.♖h1 ♖bc8 33.♔g1**



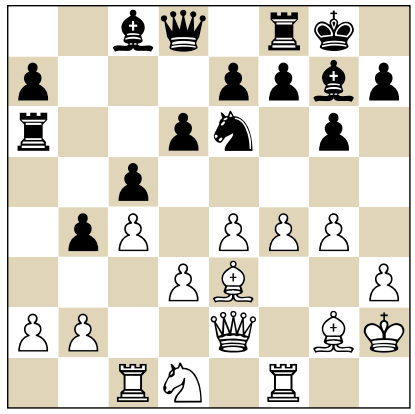
Well, if that isn't a good example of activating your rooks, I don't know what is! The strange thing was, I was sure this theme looked vaguely familiar.
And then it hit me!

Enrique Reinhardt
William Lombardy
Mar del Plata 1958

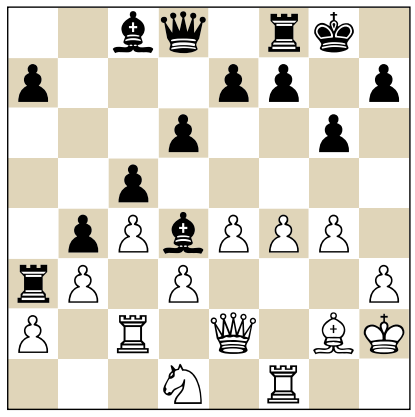


In this position, Lombardy came up with a very original manoeuvre:

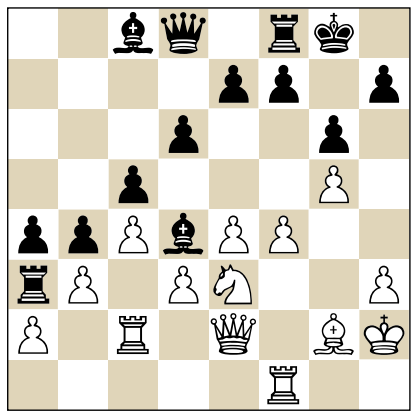
16...♖b6 17.♖c1 ♖a6



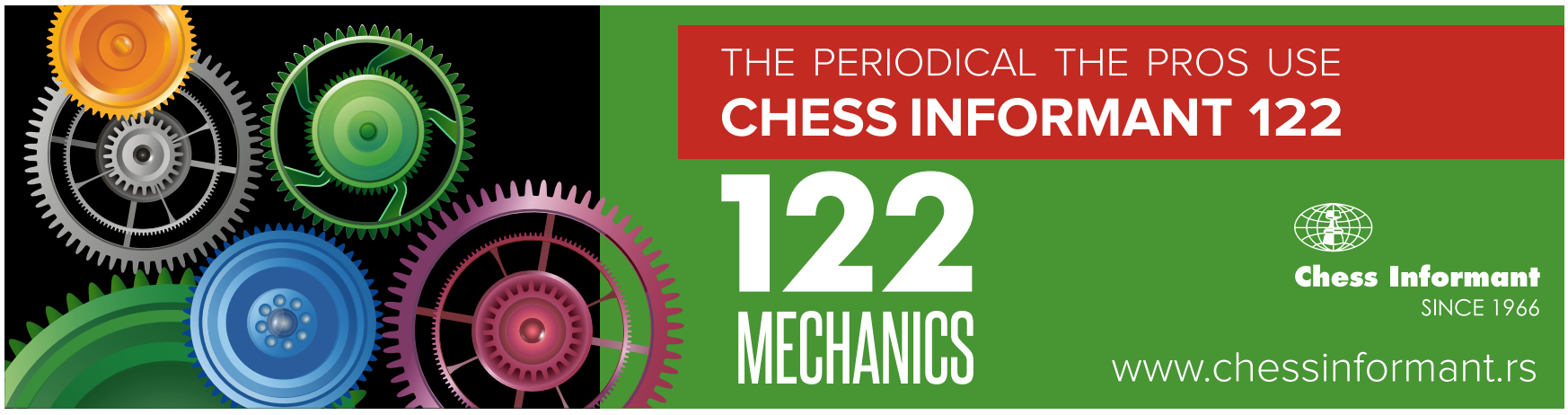
18.b3 ♘d4 19.♗xd4 ♗xd4 20.♖c2 ♖a3



21.♘e3 a5 22.g5 a4



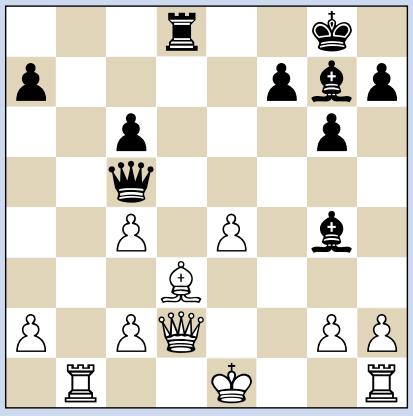
Worked perfectly! ■



Beware: Brilliancy!

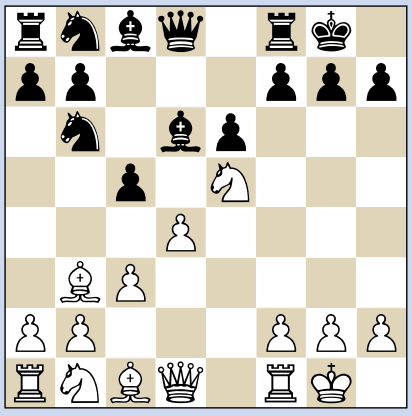
Solutions of page 89

Yochanan Afek



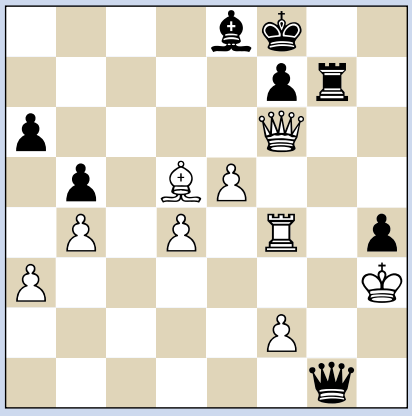
Beukema-Afek
Brasschaat 2009

The straightforward **18...♗c3! 19.♕xc3 ♕e3+ 20.♔f1 ♗e2+ 21.♗xe2 ♕xc3** would have done the trick.



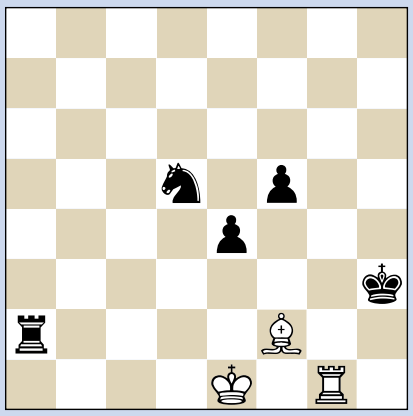
Afek-Nandhidhaa
London 2011

10.♘xf7! ♖xf7 Or 10...♔xf7 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♕h5+. **11.dxc5 ♗xh2+ 12.♔xh2 ♘d5 13.♔g1** would have left White with a clear positional edge in addition to his extra pawn.



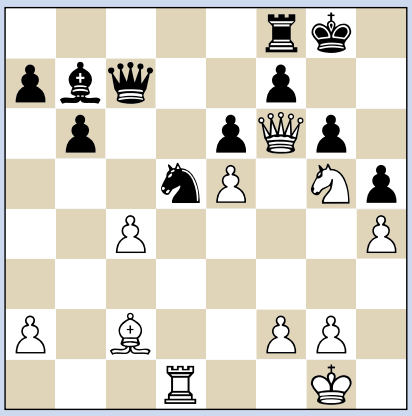
Afek-Giri
Groningen 2008

White could round off a good game with **52.♕d6+ ♔g8 53.♗xf7+! ♗xf7** Or 53...♖xf7 54.♖g4+. **54.♕d8+ ♔h7 55.♖xh4+** and wins. A chance he may not get again, I am afraid...



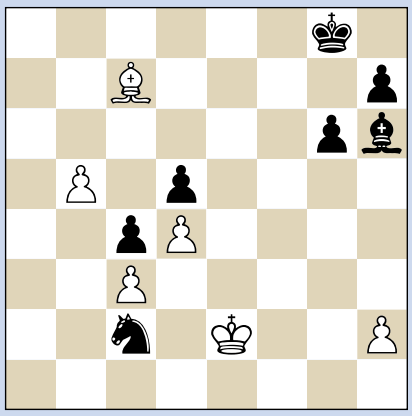
Afek-Lybin
Kiev 1996

White could have composed an endgame study with **1.♖g5! ♖a1+ 2.♔d2 e3+ 3.♗xe3 ♖a2+ 4.♔e1 ♘xe3 5.♖g3+! ♔h2 6.♖h3+!** Precision till the very end: 6.♖xe3? ♔g2 wins for Black. **6...♔g1 7.♖h1+ ♔g2 8.♖h2+ ♔xh2** Stalemate!



Afek-Jain
Hastings 2007/08

White missed a brilliant opportunity as proposed by GM John Shaw: **27.♖xd5! ♗xd5** On 27...exd5 28.e6 is a killer. **28.♗xg6!! fxg6 29.♕xg6+ ♕g7** 29...♔h8 30.♕xh5+ ♔g8 31.♕g6+ ♔h8 32.cxd5 is an easy win. **30.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 31.cxd5 ♔g6 32.♘xe6 ♖e8 33.d6 ♖xe6 34.d7** and wins.



Afek-Magem
Lisbon 2001

Black missed the amazing defence **47...♗g7!! 48.♗e5 ♗xe5 49.dxe5 d4! 50.♔d2 ♘a1!** To the corner! **51.cxd4 ♔f7 52.♔c3 ♘b3 53.♔xc4 ♘a5+ 54.♔c5 ♔e6! 55.b6 g5! 56.♔b5 ♘b7 57.♔a6 ♘d8 58.b7 ♘c6! 59.♔b6 ♘b8 60.♔c7 ♘a6+ 61.♔b6 ♘b8** With a draw. At least this one, for a change, was missed by my opponent!

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Jan Timman

Baadur Jobava Predictably unpredictable

One of the most original present-day players is Baadur Jobava, whose popularity is borne out by the many press reports and the talk about him on the various chat platforms. Jobava's games feature an abundant variety of openings, and his middlegames are filled with all kinds of sacrifices.

No one was surprised, therefore, when the Georgian grandmaster received an invitation to this year's edition of the traditional Univé tournament in the Dutch town of Hoogeveen. The tournament had a new director: Loek van Wely. Loek had come up with a new tournament formula: two six-game matches instead of the traditional double-round four-player event. Van Wely's idea was to pit two players of contrasting styles against each other – Shirov against Giri, Jobava against me – with the idea that the fireworks on the board would have to be provided by Shirov and Jobava and the classical moves would come from the two Dutch players.

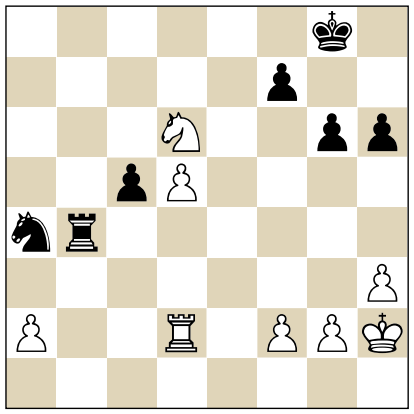
An additional advantage was that the matches would line up representatives of four different generations. During the opening ceremony in Hoogeveen, two extraordinary facts were mentioned: at the time of Jobava's birth, in 1983, I occupied third place in the world rankings, while in Giri's year of birth, 1994, Shirov occupied the same place, also behind Karpov and Kasparov.

Shirov and I both failed to resurrect our glory days and were comprehensively beaten, 4½-1½. In Shirov's case this was mainly because his preparation had been less than thorough. I myself had absolutely no complaints about the positions resulting from my openings, but I repeatedly suffered from a sudden loss of concentration halfway the game. This can be deadly.

'It must have been hard to prepare for Jobava,' someone said during the opening ceremony, but I could honestly reply that this had not been the case. On the contrary, Jobava is a very rewarding player to prepare for. For what kind of tournament would you have to thoroughly study 1.b3 and the Budapest Gambit? It soon became clear, however, that Jobava had decided to play normal openings – in his first game a quiet Bogo-Indian as Black; in the second one a tame line of the Queen's Indian as White. The latter game I lost due to a horrible blunder in an equal position.

> 'The matches lined up representatives of four different generations.'

In Game 3, I could have levelled the score, but then this happened:

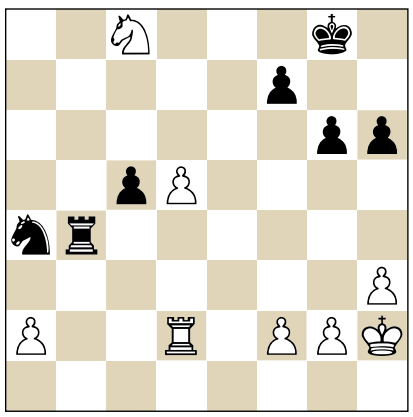


Timman-Jobava
Hoogeveen 2014 (3rd match game)
position after 31... ♖b4

White has a solid extra pawn, and with 32.a3 I could have forced a winning knight ending, e.g. 32...♖d4 33.♖xd4 cxd4 34.♘c4 d3 35.♔g3 ♘b6 36.d6! ♔f8 37.d7! ♘xd7 38.♔f3, and White collects the d-pawn, after which the passed a-pawn will decide. But I thought I had an easier win.

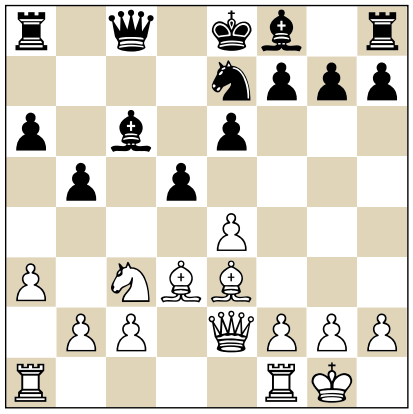
32.♘c8

With the idea that the knight ending after 32...♖d4 33.♖xd4 cxd4 34.d6 ♘c5 35.♘b6 ♔f8 36.♔g1 would be even easier to win. But Black has another possibility.



32...♔f8! I couldn't believe my eyes, but this is possible.
33.d6 ♔e8 34.d7+ ♔d8 35.♘d6
Bitter necessity. White has to give up his mighty d-pawn, as Black can meet 35.♘e7 with 35...♖b6. In the remainder of the game I got other winning chances, but I failed to use those, too, and the game ended in a draw.

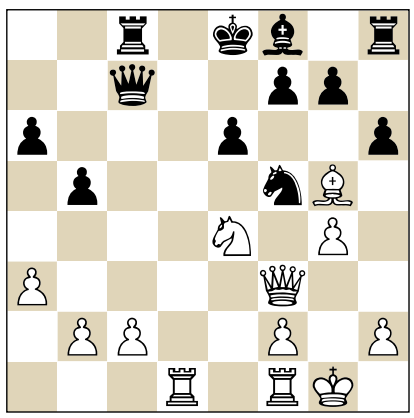
I threw away another good winning chance in the fourth game, and in Game 5 disaster struck again.



Timman-Jobava
Hoogeveen 2014 (5th match game)
position after 11... d5

Black has just advanced his d-pawn, which is quite risky, since he is opening the position before developing his kingside. So it seemed to me that White should already be winning, an assessment that was confirmed by the computer. In a rapid game I would immediately have gone 12.♖ad1, which would have been very strong. But on occasion, the luxury of having oceans of time can backfire. There is a trap: because I work so much with computers these days, I am inclined to calculate a great many variations instead of relying on my intuition.

I did not, for example, manage to make the following line watertight: 12.♖ad1 dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4 14.♘xe4 ♘f5 (after 14...♘d5, 15.♗d4 is very strong) 15.♗g5 ♕c7 16.♕f3 ♖c8 17.g4 h6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The problem is that after 18.gxf5 hxg5 Black threatens mate on h2, while 18.♗f4 ♘h4! 19.♕g3 ♕c6 won't yield a clear result either. If I had been fresh, I would certainly have seen that 18.♗f6! wins at once. But I would have done even better by not calculating any of this at all and following Euwe's dictum: trust your first hunch. In the end I played: **12.f3**

NEW IN CHESS

Baadur Jobava: One of the most original present-day top players.

This is not even such a bad move, but 12.e5, to get a very favourable variation of the French Defence, would have been better. In the end I even managed to lose the game, mostly really because I was so angry with myself for allowing my winning advantage to slip away. In the final game I could have forced a draw, but instead of doing so I tried to do the impossible… with the predictable disastrous result.

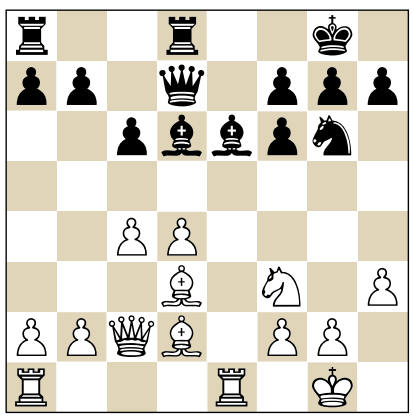
So Jobava ended up winning the match outright without having to show the spectacular chess he is known for. He was not given time to rest on his laurels, however, because during the match he had received a late invitation for the Grand Prix, which meant that he would have to sit down at the board again in Tashkent two days after our final game. He hurriedly booked a morning flight via Kiev. In front of the Hoogeveen town hall, the flamboyant Georgian accidentally dropped the gigantic winner's trophy the organizers had saddled him with, damaging it beyond repair. Then Van Wely drove

Jan Timman

him to Schiphol Airport in the middle of the night. A tournament director's life is not always a bed of roses: the following morning, Van Wely had to get up early to pick me up in Arnhem for the Bundesliga match in Bochum. Neither of us got more than a draw.

The next day, Jobava – like Giri – had to play in Tashkent. In the first round he played a wild game against Nakamura, which he eventually lost because of time-trouble. The Tashkent tournament used the old-fashioned time-control of 40 moves in two hours, without increments, and it is not so easy to adjust to this. By rights, the same time-control should be used in all tournaments, but in FIDE's top events, they always stick to the time-honoured control. I actually agree with this. I fail to see why a player shouldn't be able to organize his or her own time; if a player gets into time-trouble, it's his or her own fault. Moreover, heart-rending time-trouble battles are part and parcel of competitive chess. Yet a poll by the ACP has shown that the majority of top grandmasters prefer the safety net of this extra half minute.

In Round 2, Jobava erred in the opening against Caruana, with the result that he was losing as White after just a few moves. But he squared his shoulders and managed to hold the game. This deliverance seemed to give him wings. Halfway the tournament, everything went his way, especially when he was Black.



Karjakin-Jobava
Tashkent 2014 (5)
position after 16.♗d2

It is not difficult to guess Jobava's next move.

16...♗xh3!

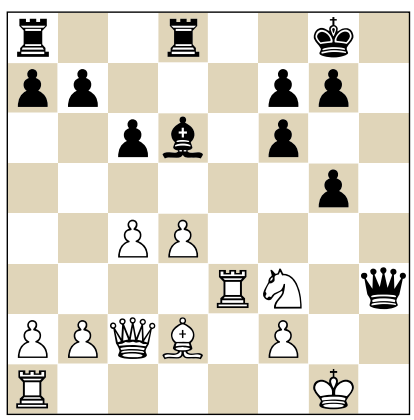
Of course. This isn't even a speculative sacrifice, but simply the computer's first suggestion: Black has a certain draw due to the white king getting so exposed.

17.gxh3 ♕xh3 18.♗xg6

A necessary swap. The knight was threatening to jump to h4.

18...hxg6 19.♖e3 g5

A good alternative was 19...♗f4. The text, threatening 20...g4, increases the possibility of White making a mistake.



20.c5 Karjakin's comments during the press conference made clear that he realized that this had been an unjustified winning attempt. White had two better alternatives:

A) 20.♖ae1 g4 21.♕f5! g6 22.♕xf6 gxf3 23.♕xf3 ♗h2+ 24.♔h1 ♗g3+, with a draw by perpetual check. Karjakin had seen this line, but he was going for more.

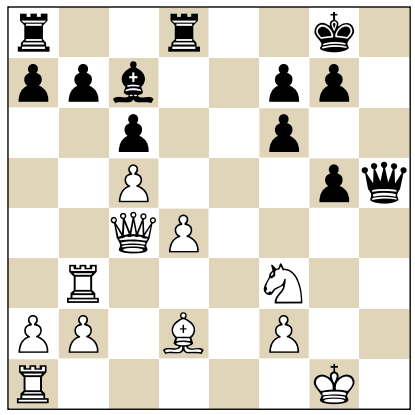
B) 20.♘e5. The sharpest continuation. Now the obvious 20...♕h5 runs into 21.♔g2! fxe5 22.♖h1 ♕g6 23.♖eh3!, and White takes over the attack. Karjakin was worried about the retreat 20...♕e6!, and it's true that White has no convincing continuation after this. 21.d5 would be met strongly by 21...♕c8.

20...♗f4 21.♖b3 ♗c7!

A strong move. Black withdraws the bishop. The main threat now is 22...♖xd4.

22.♕c4 ♕h5

Better was 22...♕g4+ 23.♔f1 ♖e8, with an advantage for Black. Now White gets a chance to equalize.



23.♔g2

White is trying to set a little trap: after 23...g4 White can play 24.♘h4!, with the result that Black will be forced to rectify his inaccuracy on the previous move. He would have done better to eliminate the strong black bishop with 23.♖xb7 ♖d7 24.♖xc7!, when the position is dynamically balanced.

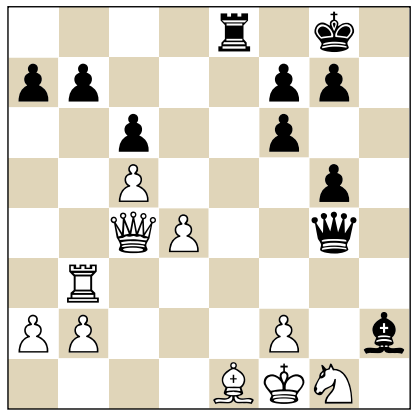
23...♕g4+ 24.♔f1 ♖e8

Keeping the white king prisoner.

25.♖e1 ♕h3+ 26.♔g1 ♖xe1+ 27.♗xe1 ♕g4+ 28.♔f1 ♖e8

The other rook also joins the attack.

29.♘g1 ♗h2

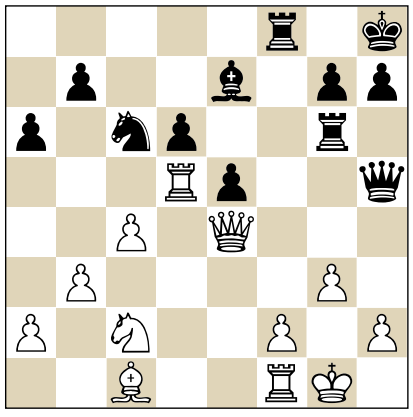


30.♘e2 This loses immediately, but after 30.♘h3 ♕e4! 31.♖e3 ♕h1 32.♔e2 ♖xe3+ 33.fxe3 g4 White wouldn't have had much to hope for either. **30...♖xe2 31.♖xb7 ♖e6** White resigned.

After Jobava's defeat of Gelfand in Round 8 he advanced to shared first place. In the next round he was White against fellow-leader Andreikin. Jobava had decided to win this game as well, but things went badly wrong and he lost hopelessly. This put paid to his chances of tournament victory; there were only two more games to play. The

game against Giri is memorable mainly because of the conflict that arose during the press conference afterwards. I will go into this briefly, because I haven't seen it properly reported anywhere yet, including the extensive description on *Chess24*, headed 'Jobava – the Good, the Bad and the Ugly'.

The game itself was not particularly important, but in order for you to get an idea of what the conflict between the players was about, I will give you a short fragment here.



Giri-Jobava
Tashkent 2014 (10)
position after 24.♖d5

The continuation was **24...♗h4 25.♗a3 ♗e7 26.♗c1** and now Jobava avoided move repetition with **26...♕h3**

This is evidence of an admirable fighting spirit, but not of great wisdom. White is structurally better, a fact that may make itself felt when Black's attacking attempts have petered out. And this is what happened. Giri got the better position and won a pawn, which he failed to cash in on in the endgame because of Jobava's tenacious defence. This must have been a serious disappointment for Giri, who hadn't won a single game in the entire tournament. He attended the press conference with a surly face and his coat on his knees, as if he wanted nothing more than to return to his hotel as quickly as possible. Jobava took the stage, starting with an apology: he was 'out of oil' after the previous day's debacle. Then he quickly went through the opening moves until he came to the diagrammed position, in which he thought he had had attacking chances. And it's true that White must make sure that Black will not transfer his knight to f5.

'Jobava took the stage, starting with an apology: he was "out of oil" after the previous day's debacle.'

At this point, press officer Karlovich thought it was time to involve Giri in the conversation.

Giri started with a slightly critical observation: 'No, I don't know, I didn't understand it so well. Let's say it's still a long way till I get mated.'

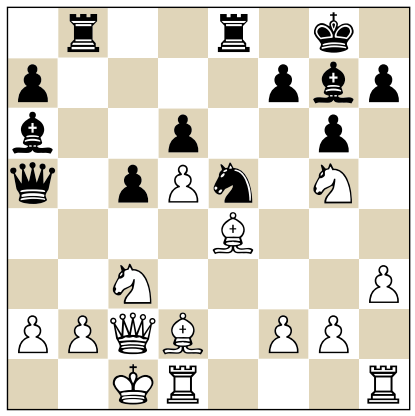
Nothing wrong with that, of course. But a minute later he said: 'Of course it is a huge attack.'

Karlovich asked him if this was meant ironically, which Giri confirmed with a smile. But this was not so much irony as unadulterated sarcasm! Jobava was basically laughed off the stage. So these were probably the words that incensed the Georgian, and not, as everyone seems to be saying, what Giri came out with later. A clearly irritated Jobava asked Giri why he had repeated moves if he hadn't taken the black attack seriously, whereupon Giri replied that he had used more time. But then he repeated that the black attack basically amounted to nothing, again with this smile at Karlovich. Then Jobava blew his top and spat out the remarks that everyone objected to: that Giri should stop smiling 'like an idiot' and show more respect. This was clearly an over-reaction, but Giri had certainly baited him. Karlovich managed to restore some semblance of harmony until Giri came out with: 'Here Baadur started defending very well, because first of all he started swearing and then he started shaking his head, so it was difficult to play against such a resourceful player.'

This seemed to imply that Jobava had acted like this to throw him off-balance, which I find rather strange. I have often played against players who acted like Jobava, but I always regarded this as welcome body language. What more can you want than an opponent who clearly reveals that he has made a mess of things? Curiously enough, Jobava asked Giri to repeat his remark in Russian. He apparently didn't know the word 'swear'. Giri obliged, but in Russian he restricted himself to the observation that his opponent had been 'resourceful'.

'Yes, I made only moves,' said Jobava. And so the press conference had been kind of salvaged. But I wonder what Jobava must have felt later, because the true import of Giri's words must have been made clear to him at some stage. One question remained unanswered: was Giri playing for a draw or would he have avoided move repetition himself later on?

In the final round, Jobava played, as he so often does, the game of the day.



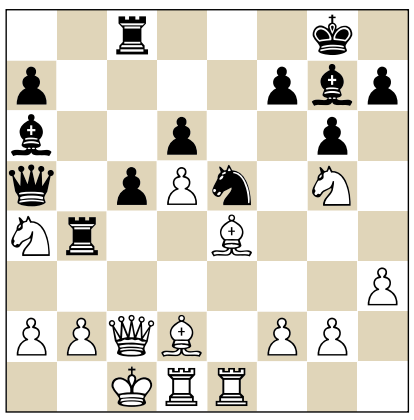
Jobava-Mamedyarov
Tashkent 2014 (11)
position after 16...♘e5

Both players in their element; this razor-sharp position has arisen straight from a popular line of the Benoni. Black has sacrificed a full piece to force White into castling queenside. The black pieces are poised for the attack.

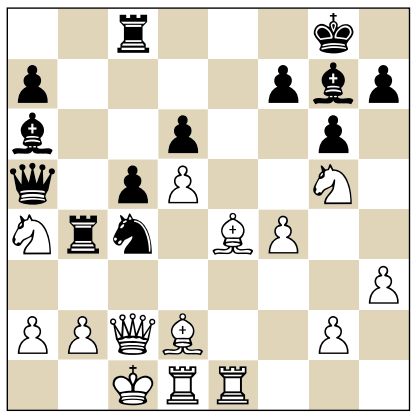
17.♖he1 A new move that is also the computer's first choice. In Bern-H.Olafsson, Sweden 1994, Black had got an excellent position after 17.♘a4 ♕d8 18.♖he1 f5 19.f4 fxe4 20.fxe5 ♗d3.

Jan Timman

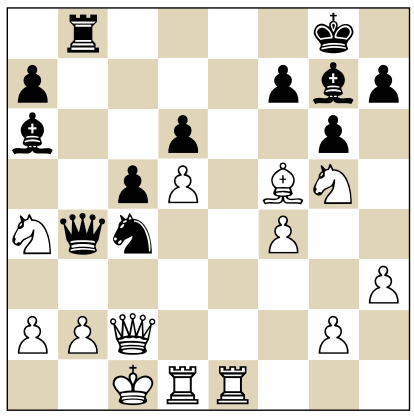
17...♖ec8
This came as a great surprise to Jobava, so we may safely assume that he had not prepared this position at home, since the text is the computer's first suggestion. Black avoids the rook swap in order to keep as many pieces on the board as possible. And there is another point to the move, which will soon become clear. The obvious 17...♘c4 was insufficient in view of the sharp riposte 18.♗d3!.
18.♘a4 ♖b4! Now the second point of the previous move becomes clear. White cannot take the rook, because this would open the c-file.



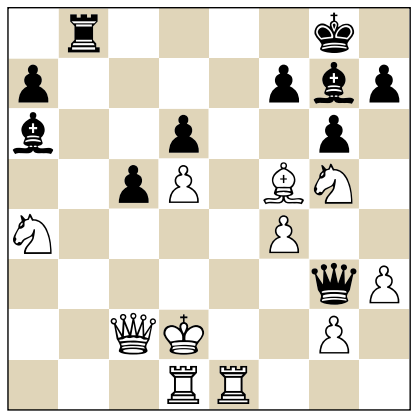
19.f4 Again the computer's first choice; but closer investigation reveals that it will eventually fail to yield an advantage. The only way White could have maintained his advantage was with the strategic move 19.♗c3!. White returns the piece to enter the endgame. After 19...♕xa4 20.♕xa4 ♖xa4 21.f4 ♘d7 22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 23.♗c2! ♖xf4 24.♖e7 Black has problems.
19...♘c4



20.♗f5! An attractive move in typical Jobava style.
20...♖cb8!
The best reply. Black leaves the bishop in peace and doubles his rooks.
21.♗xb4 ♕xb4



22.a3
Jobava thought he was winning here, but this was far too optimistic an assessment. And incidentally, all complications after 22.♕b3 gxf5 23.♖e7 ♗b5! 24.♘c3 ♘xb2! also turn out well for Black.
22...♘xa3
Black could also have withdrawn the queen, but Mamedyarov has accurately calculated that the knight sacrifice will yield him at least a draw.
23.bxa3 ♕xa3+ 24.♔d2 ♕g3!
An important finesse. Now White must be careful not to find himself with an inferior position.



25.♖b1!
The most accurate move. Now Black has all kinds of promising possibilities, but there's no more in it than a draw. ■

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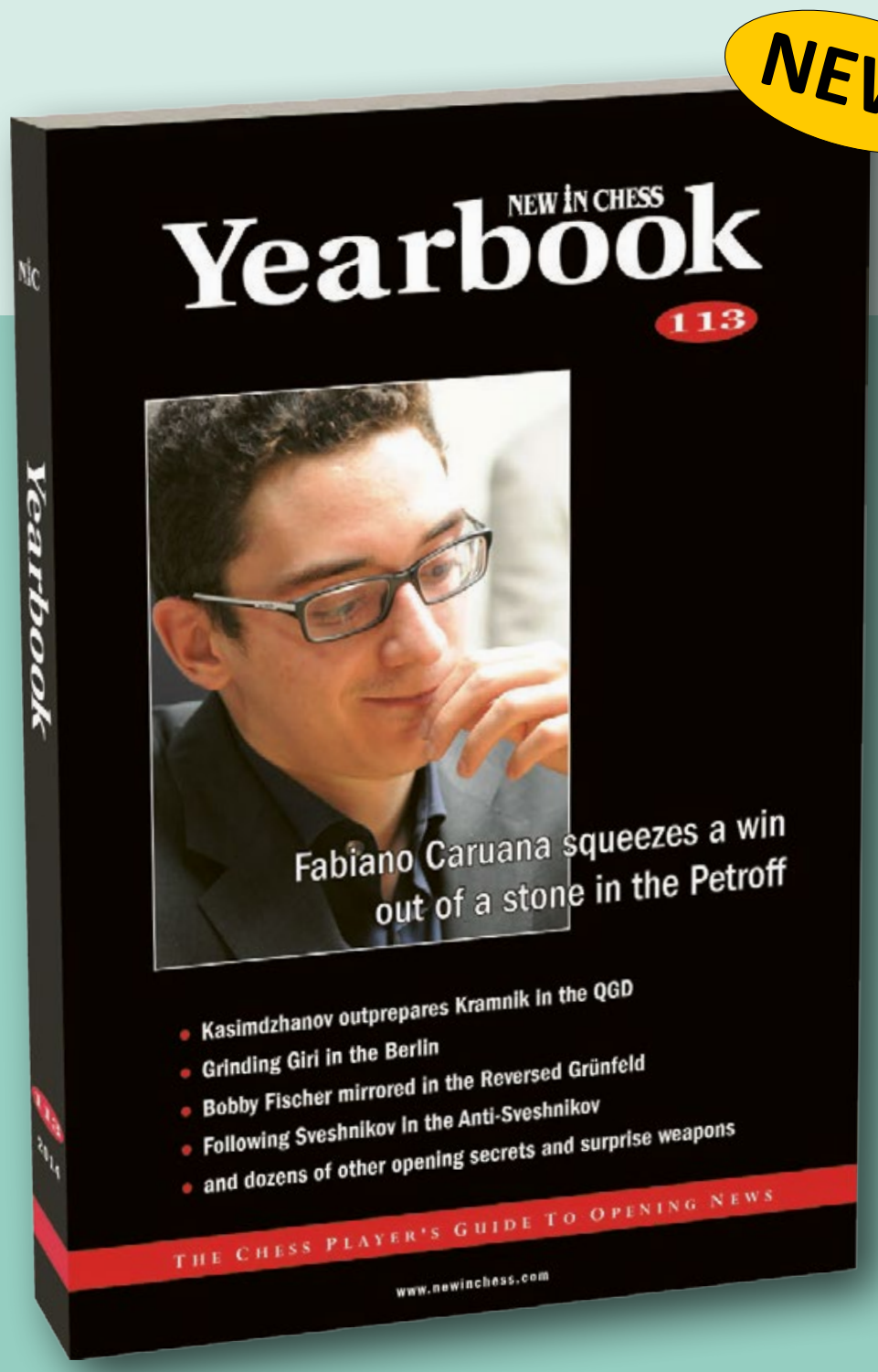
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Alexander Khalifman

CURRENT ELO: 2613
DATE OF BIRTH: January 18, 1966
PLACE OF BIRTH: Leningrad, Soviet Union
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: St. Petersburg, Russia

What is your favourite colour?
Green.

What kind of food makes you happy?
No food in the world can make me happy. But some food (like authentic Southern Chinese) can make me unhappy.

And what drink?
More or less the same goes for this.

Who is your favourite author?
I have always hated questions like this. How is it possible to choose one?! OK, let's say Victor Pelevin.

What was the best book you have ever read?
Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
A Beautiful Mind.

What is your favourite TV series?
That's easy, I never watch TV (except for major sports events).

Do you have a favourite actor?
Once again, hard to choose one. OK, Jack Nicholson.

And a favourite actress?
Julia Roberts.

What music do you like to listen to?
Good old rock. Pink Floyd, Dire Straits, Jethro Tull, Genesis, etc.

Do you have a favourite painter?
Rockwell Kent.

What do you see as your best result ever?
Well, maybe Las Vegas 1999 (winning the FIDE Knock-Out World Championship – ed.).

What was the best game you have ever played?
Probably against Anatoly Karpov in Reggio Emilia 1991/92. It was far from perfect, but it was a great fight.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
If it's only about chess, Bobby Fischer. He took chess to a new level.

Is there a chess book that has had a profound influence on you?
Aron Nimzowitsch, *My System*.

What was the most exciting chess game you have ever seen?
Anderssen-Kieseritzky. No joke.

What is the best chess country in the world?
It used to be Yugoslavia, then it was the Netherlands... Now maybe Azerbaijan.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Drinking (but this info is a bit outdated). I must admit I don't know much about the new generation (except for their chess).

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
All sorts of gambling (this info is unfortunately not outdated). And OMG how much time some guys waste on stupid social networks! Just incredible.

What is it that you appreciate most in a person?
'Be yourself – no matter what they say'.

What is it that you dislike in a person?
Falsehood.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
I would probably write books for kids.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Just my good friends. I have always preferred to admire stars from a safe distance.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?
Don't complain, don't explain.

What is your favourite place in the world?
The centre of St. Petersburg.

What is your greatest fear?
I have noticed there are things it is better not to speak about, because if one does they tend to happen. So...

How do you relax?
I don't tend to get stressed.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 Chess World Champion?
Most likely Chinese. Although I have strong doubts there will be such a title in 2050. For many reasons.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
Not the knowledge, but the way of thinking, yes.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?
'Don't stop till you get enough.' This was not said about chess? Strange...

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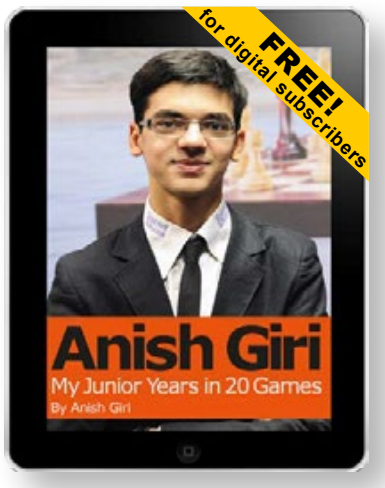

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